SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE

December 1929

VOL. LXXXVI NO. 6

As I Like It

BY WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

If all famous men who have been dead more than one hundred years were allowed to revisit the glimpses of the moon, which one of them do you think would most speedily feel at home and accommodate himself to the conditions of this present time? My choice would be Benjamin Franklin.

When Franklin died, the methods of transportation had changed not at all since the days of Abraham. If, in this blessed month of December, 1929, Franklin should suddenly appear on Broad Street in his beloved Philadelphia, and look around him, he would see trolley cars, motor omnibuses, taxicabs, luxurious limousines, hear the noise of the subway under his feet and the roar of an airplane in the sky. I should give him one week, no more, to feel perfectly and entirely at home. Within seven days he would take a taxi to the railway station as casually as I take it; he would call up some member of the American Philosophical Society on the telephone, with no grin of foolish wonder; he would switch on the electric lights in his hotel room, possibly remembering an afternoon when he stood out in the rain; he would read attentively in the morning paper the cabled news from Europe; instead of being alarmed and distressed at this "age of machines," he would contemplate the world and find it good.

Perhaps the thing that would most surprise him would be the advertisements in that periodical he founded, *The Saturday Evening Post*.

Within one year he would win the Edward W. Bok Prize given to the citizen who had done the most for the city of Philadelphia; for in that one year he would have suggested thirty-seven different ways in which city administration methods could be improved; within two years he would have persuaded the United States of America to join the League of Nations.

Instead of looking old-fashioned, in a very short time he would be the most up-to-date person in the country.

For Benjamin Franklin, apart from his stupendous genius, was what I call a truly civilized man. Such a man has a contemporary and hospitable mind, understands and profits by the age in which he lives, does not believe the younger generation are all going to the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

devil, welcomes new improvements, is not afraid of the future, has too much intelligence to be jealous, obstinate, or petulant.

Other men in history who seem civilized are Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Julius Cæsar, Montaigne, John Selden, Goethe, Turgenev. Observe that all these individuals were citizens of the world; their urbanity and tolerance were accompanied by an unquenchable intellectual curiosity. They had spacious minds, unconscious of national boundaries, free from narrow prejudices; you cannot imagine any one of them wearing a campaign button.

In every age Intolerance has lifted its ugly and repulsive head; innumerable persons in good bodily health really believe that those who differ from them are either lacking in intellect or are morally oblique. You hear them say, "Such fellows ought to be stood up against a wall and shot," "There ought to be a law," etc., etc. When you hear the expression, "I cannot understand how So-and-so can act the way he does," you may be sure that it is not the only thing the speaker fails to understand. He understands indeed very little. There are many who wish to prescribe how others should dress, what they should eat, drink, and smoke, the precise form of religion or patriotism or politics they should support—in short, they wish to standardize both the bodies and the minds of their fellow countrymen, the standard in every case to be the one followed by themselves.

It is also interesting to observe that a man who seems dissatisfied with nearly everything, who is dissatisfied with the weather, with the President, with his employer, with his neighbors, with his income, should be so satisfied with himself. Dissatisfaction, like charity, should begin at home.

The season of Christmas is at hand. Suppose we take advantage of it to make a Declaration of Independence, not for ourselves, but for others. Suppose Christians—God save the mark!—cease using the word Jew as an epithet; stop thinking of "foreigners" as inferior; give credit to political and other opponents for sincerity and intelligence; acquire the cosmopolitan and slough off the village mind. Let us once and forever get rid of the idea that we have a monopoly of patriotism or of any other commodity.

For example, the question whether we should or should not enlarge the navy is a question to be settled by serious thought and by the best evidence obtainable. It is absurd for big-navy men to call those who differ from them damned pacifists, weaklings, and cowards; and it is absurd for those who think that the time has come to limit armaments, to call all their opponents profiteers and crooks. We can hold to our opinions on this subject—and I certainly have mine—without trying to discredit those on the other side.

It is absurd for Catholics to dislike Protestants and for Protestants to dislike Catholics; if things break right, both Catholics and Protestants will have to spend eternity together. How will they manage that, if they cannot get along here for a few minutes? I know of only one church in America where the congregation is made up of Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Jews, Unitarians, Latter Day Saints, Christian Scientists and many other religious sectarians, and where they all worship together like one family. And they really worship, for every

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sunday they hear from the pulpit the Christian gospel.

Is there anything better than tolerance? Yes. What is it? It is Fellowship. The church I have described is not an illustration of religious tolerance. It is an illustration of religious fellowship. If any one imagines that the international mind means the destruction of patriotism or that religious fellowship means the weakening of conviction, let him consider St. Paul, who was a one hundred per cent Jew and a man of the most positive conviction; it was he and not another who spoke the finest words on both tolerance and fellowship the world has ever heard.

The first thirty years of the twentieth century are drawing to an end. In comparing the literary output of these thirty years with that of the first three decades of the nineteenth century, two things are immediately apparent. So far as English literature is concerned, our epoch is immeasurably inferior in poetry, and immeasurably superior in drama. The years 1800–1830 saw the complete works of Keats, Byron, Shelley, and Scott; and nearly all the best work of Wordsworth and Coleridge. We have our poets, who I hope will not be forgotten, but not for a moment can we show anything like the burst of creative activity of a century ago. On the other hand, not one English play written from 1800 to 1830 has any merit; whereas in our time we have had Barrie, Shaw, Galsworthy, Synge, Yeats, Dunsany, Ervine, Jones, Pinero, Granville-Barker, O'Neill. It is the greatest period in the history of the English drama since the death of Shakespeare.

In the novel, it is not so easy to establish superiority for either age. The early years of the nineteenth century had Walter Scott and Jane Austen; we have had Galsworthy, Conrad, Wells, Moore, Kipling, James, Bennett, O. Henry, Walpole and others. With all due respect, not one of these is as *certain* of immortality as Walter Scott and Jane Austen. But it is difficult to believe that "The Forsyte Saga," and some works by these other men will be forgotten. On the whole, I think the most considerable achievement in the prose fiction of our time is "The Forsyte Saga" with "A Modern Comedy." It is a good story well told, and it is also the social history of an entire period, soberly conceived and sincerely performed.

In what is somewhat amusingly called "non-fiction," they could have read Lamb, Hazlitt, Hunt, De Quincey, and the early work of Carlyle and Macaulay. We have Chesterton, Lytton Strachey, and suit yourself.

Immortal or transitory, all hail to Captain Percival Christopher Wren! He has triumphantly brought back the Story to the Novel. His books are long, but they are the only ones I invariably wish were longer. I hate to turn the last page, just as I hate to see the final curtain fall on a good play. He is the only romancer of our time on whom has fallen the mantle of Dumas. No one who has read about Beau Geste and his brothers or who has seen them in the motion-pictures could possibly forget them. And this past summer of 1929 the gallant Captain thrilled me again with "Soldiers of Misfortune." I read it with breathless attention. Such terrific prize-fights make other pugilistic contests seem like a game of Badminton. And my sorrow at reaching the last sentence in this glorious book was tempered by the certainty that more about this particular "stout fella" is coming.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Also, as a hardened and unashamed reader of detective novels, I greeted with joy the sixth volume of the incredible adventures of Bulldog Drummond, who rears his burly and beery frame in a book called "Temple Tower." I began it with high anticipations and was not in the least disappointed. Bulldog Drummond passes safely through the most horrible perils, and instead of composing a ballade while he kills, he roars with laughter. He is a swashbuckler after my own heart; in the midst of death he is in life, very much so. The air of deadly danger is as essential to his comfort as water to a fish. The ingredients of this delightful work are horror and humor. I sincerely hope the author is young and in excellent health.

And now, on the broad highway of romantic fiction, comes bowling along "The Omnibus of Crime," a fat book of nearly twelve hundred pages, containing "Stories of Crime, Blood, Destiny, Cruelty, Horror, Revenge, Madness, Detection, Witchcraft." The driver of this portentous Tank is Dorothy L. Sayers, author herself of detective novels, of which I like best "Lord Peter Views the Body" and "The Dawson Pedigree." She is a learned woman, having taken First Honours in Mediæval Literature at Oxford. Her introduction to this collection of crimes, containing tales by the quick and the dead, is both witty and wise.

It was a happy thought of the publishers to dig up a book written—and painted—by H. G. Wells in the year 1898. He wrote a story for a child and illustrated it with a child's paintbox. "The Adventures of Tommy" is its name, and it is a fine thing for a Christmas present.

Among the many Autobiographies (though the author says this one isn't) that I have recently read, I place among the very best "Memories of an Old Parliamentarian" by that redoubtable Irish octogenarian, T. P. O'Connor. These two tall volumes, beautifully printed and easy to hold in either hand, are filled with type-written portraits—Gladstone, Parnell, Morley, Healy, Campbell-Bannerman, Chamberlain, Balfour, and all the other leading lights of the House. Parnell, whom the author knew intimately, is the dominating figure. His mysterious personality seems to have been created for this biography-loving age; he is bound to be the hero of innumerable works. (But I have also never seen elsewhere a more thrilling portrait of Gladstone than that given here.) Although T. P.'s sketches of Parliamentary champions are objective, I found the character of the author as interesting as any of them. The account of his early years, the terrible hardships he endured, make his survival to the age of eighty seem miraculous. His charity and sympathy for all mankind are noteworthy; instead of being made callous by suffering, he became ever more warm-hearted and full of understanding. He is a good man.

But now it becomes necessary for me to read the two thick volumes of the autobiography of Tim Healy, the best-hated man on earth. Ask my friend St. John Ervine what he thinks of him!

After considering the lives of Gladstone, O'Connor, Healy and others, what nonsense it is to hear cautious people say you must sleep eight hours every night, and be careful not to "overdo." Here are three men who overworked all their lives; they repeatedly passed entire nights of wild excitement without any sleep at all.

"The History of Christianity in the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Light of Modern Knowledge" is a co-operative work of nearly eight hundred pages. Like all books of this kind, it has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that we get the mature and well-considered views of twenty-two scholars. The disadvantage is that each one writes as if the others were looking over his shoulder. Furthermore, nearly all the men are British, and represent more or less the same point of view; and as the origins of Christianity and early Church History form one of the most debatable and baffling of all subjects, it is certain that if this work had been prepared by twenty-two other and equally eminent scholars, the conclusions would be different. After all, the earliest "Lives" of Christ, those in the Four Gospels, are much the best. There may be contradictions in the Four Gospels, but they are not nearly so contradictory as the accounts written by twentieth-century scholars.

For those who wish to read a Life of George Washington, written neither in sorrow nor in anger, free from smartness and the desire to score off the hero, written also with no touch of panegyric or hero-worship, I recommend the new biography by Shelby Little.

The death of Jesse Lynch Williams (in September) was a severe loss to contemporary letters. His novels sparkled with wit and keen observation of life, they were invariably well written, and contained interesting men and women. His plays—of which one was awarded the Pulitzer Prize—had a touch of distinction.

One of the events of this year of grace is the appearance of the new edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, which contains in its numerous and handsome volumes the world of fact and the world of thought. This colossal undertaking has this time beaten all its previous records.

As we approach the year 1932, the centenary of the death of Goethe, books about him are bound to increase and multiply. The latest is by a Frenchman, Jean Marie Carré, translated by Eleanor Hard. This is not a work of any importance, but is pleasantly written, in an easy, gossipy style, and gives the reader an intimate view of Goethe the man. One would hardly believe in these pages that he could have been what he was, the greatest writer since Shakespeare; but it is an entertaining book, for all that, slap-dash as it is. Its carelessness in composition may be indicated by these two sentences, one on page 198, the other on page 199.

"Goethe was forty-five and getting a little fat. He never walked now, had lost his enthusiasm for horseback riding, and clung to his carriage."

"He walked through all the footpaths of Thuringia, his head bent toward the ground as he sought his plants and bits of rock."

Among the innumerable books for children for the approaching holiday season, I call attention to "Picture Tales from the Italian," by Florence Botsford, with thirty-one illustrations in black and white by Grace Gilkison; a convenient and charming new edition of "Alice in Wonderland," with illustrations by Willy Pogany; "Two Brothers and Their Animal Friends," written and illustrated by Lois Lenski; "A Busy Day," with words, pictures, and music by Beatrice and Sylvia Tobias; "The Cow Next Door," by Marion Bullard, with highly diverting pictures; "The Christopher Robin Story Book," selected from four of his works by the incom-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

parable A. A. Milne; "The Magic Doll of Roumania," written for American children by Marie, Queen of Roumania, and illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham; "From Morning to Night, The Day of a Two-year-old in Pictures," by Mabel Pyne; a pretty thing. Then there are two good books for boys, "Drake's Lad," by Rupert Sargent Holland, and "The Wonderful Voyages of Cap'n Pen," by Harry Irving Shumway. A war story for boys, "Hungry Crawford, Legionnaire," by Captain Walter Karig, and illustrated by the author, is full of action, as is also "Walt Henley, Skipper," by Alfred F. Loomis, illustrated by Clifford Townley. Two admirable books for girls are "You Make Your Own Luck," by the distinguished novelist, Elsie Singmaster, and "The Attic Child," by Lucile Morrison, which is a masterpiece of its kind. A clever guide to amusement for young people is "Marionettes," by Edith Flack Ackley, illustrated by Marjorie Flack.

For grown-up boys like me, I recommend "East South East," a yarn of the sea and whales by Frank Morley, which is so good that I think the author's next book will be better.

I sometimes wonder, on the rare occasions when I am not wondering at something else, why it is that so many books for boys and girls are printed in huge type, and so many books for men and women printed in tiny type. Young people have the eyes of eagles and no letters are too small for them. When I was a boy I bought the complete works of Shakespeare in one volume, for fifty cents, and read it with ease. To-day I should have to use a microscope. My slogan—small type for small people, big type for the big.

Alfred Noyes has taken a brief vacation from the composition of poetry, and produced his first novel, "The Sun Cure," a humorous story of a dignified gentleman, who passes through an experience which is common in nightmares, but in this instance is no dream. A few digs at the "new" verse are included in the narrative.

The accomplished American novelist, Fanny Hurst, has written a novel, "Five and Ten," remorselessly showing up the habits and manners of the wives, sons, and daughters of the very rich; there are almost too many details, but they are convincing. She adopts also, probably unconsciously, the methods of Eugene O'Neill in "Strange Interlude," giving the thoughts of the persons along with their conversation. While the multi-millionaire is talking with his wife, he keeps saying in his thoughts "Damn her! damn her! damn her!" When you meet her, you will not blame him. The book is well conceived and, as might be expected, shows decided ability. The hero, Mr. Rarick, is a triumph of characterization. My one adverse criticism would be that everything is rather extreme. The "idle rich" are both tremendously rich and tremendously idle; the pedantic scholar is terrifically scholarly. The book is dedicated to New York City, which the author looks at with daily increasing wonder, and so do I.

Do you want to taste a style that will be to most Americans both strange and new? A style that is condiment rather than food? Then try "Thirty Tales and Sketches," by R. B. Cunninghame Graham, introduced to us by the man who has stood sponsor for Conrad, Hudson, and many other writers. I mean of course Edward Garnett, himself the son of the great scholar Richard Garnett, the husband of the great translator Con-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stance Garnett, and the father of the clever novelist David Garnett. Cunninghame Graham has been called "the most unpopular of British writers," and has done his best to earn the appellation. If the English people were really as hopelessly bad as he says they are, the British Empire would have long ago gone to perdition. But it seems to be in excellent condition; and certainly nothing pleases Englishmen more than to be attacked; they not only thrive upon it, they enjoy it. So I think this unpopular writer will eventually become popular. Read the chapter in this book on Parnell, his hero, his idol. He writes not with ink, but with vitriol. Cunninghame Graham was born in Scotland in 1852, worked on a ranch in Texas, in Mexico, and in South America; then became a landed proprietor in Scotland; as a Socialist, was one of the first Labour members to sit in Parliament, has lived many months and very much in Spain and Morocco, and helped to "win the war" by buying horses for the English government in South Africa. His style is much better than his temper, for he seems to be in a very bad temper indeed.

A scholarly work of value to all interested in Elizabethan Drama is "A Dictionary of Actors, and of Other Persons Associated with the Public Representation of Plays in England before 1642," by Doctor Edwin Nungezer, who teaches English in the University of Oklahoma. It is a good book. One turns naturally to the following actors: Richard Burbage, Edward Alleyn, Richard Tarlton, Nathan Field, Ben Jonson, and one is not disappointed. For my part, I believe that William Shakespeare was one of the greatest of Elizabethan actors; but why on earth, said he to himself, should I waste my time acting, when I can write plays for others to act, and when I remember the look of Stratford in the springtime?

Speaking of that great actor and splendid man, Edward Alleyn, let me urge American tourists to go to Dulwich and see the art gallery; "it isn't far from London." Every picture has a good light. Read, before and after the visit, the early chapters of George Moore's "Evelyn Innes," and contemplate the two pictures by Dow and by Watteau.

The Dutch Reformed Church in America, which, like the two qualifying adjectives, has a noble history, publishes a fine, illustrated and well-indexed work of more than five hundred pages, called "The Tercentenary Year," prepared by Edgar Franklin Romig. It is a record of the celebration of the founding of the First Church in 1628 in New Netherlands, now New York, and "the beginning of organized religious life under the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America."

Many persons have joined the Asolo Club, not knowing of its extinction; I am glad they went to Asolo, and hope that all Scribnerians will eventually go there, to see the beauty of the place, and to do homage to Robert Browning and Eleonora Duse. But I believe that all the Clubs my readers can stand at present are the Fano Club and the Faery Queene Club; and although I am quite aware that these two are two too many for some of my readers, their importance justifies their continuance.

The great Montaigne, who visited Fano in 1581, and whose remarks about the good food and water he found there were quoted in the issue of last month, commented also on another subject that always interested him—beautiful women. His diary says, "This town is re-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nowned above all those in Italy for its handsome women: we saw none, but some very ugly ones; and when I questioned an honest man of the town, he told me that the age of them was past."

The latest members of the world-famous Fano Club are two families from Philadelphia, Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Heyl, and Mr. and Mrs. James McMullan. They also visited Asolo and its feminine equivalent, Asola, which mine eyes have never beheld.

FAERY QUEENE CLUB

The following letter will interest many Scribnerians:

Shubert Theatre,
New York City,
Sept. 4, 1929.

Dear Dr. Phelps:

My sister and I would appreciate being enrolled in your Faery Queene Club. Leaving America to dance in Europe, a friend gave us a copy. We danced in various European countries beginning with London; using the Faery Queene as a standby between turns. Most of our reading of this book occurred while we were playing at the Folies Bergère in Paris; as we were featured there for fourteen months. At present we are being featured in "A Night in Venice," and a couple of weeks ago we turned the last page of the Faery Queene.

Sincerely,
BETH AND BETTY DODGE.

They are heartily welcomed into the Club; entering at the same time is Harry C. Craig, Jr., of Curllsville, Pa., who at the age of nineteen read the entire work.

Few German lyrics are better known than Goethe's "Röslein." In the third stanza, beginning

Und der wilde Knabe brach
's Röslein auf der Heiden,
Röslein wehrte sich und stach,

I have always sung the fourth line

Half *ihm* jetzt kein weh und ach,

but in turning over a volume of German lyrics, I found that "ihm" was "ihr," giving an entirely different turn to the whole poem. I therefore wrote to my friend and colleague, Professor Carl Schreiber, a distinguished German scholar, and Curator of the famous Goethe Collection at Yale. He writes me,

The Weimar Ausgabe (1887) prints it "Half ihm," but Max Morris in his six vol. work on "Der junge Goethe" (1912) has it "Half ihr." . . . I should throw in my lot with Morris, if the decision were left to me.

And so should I, for in art as well in life it is the woman who pays. But in this particular instance the girl has just told the boy what she will do if he does not leave her alone; and she proceeds to do it. It is curious that there should be authority for two such different versions of one of the world's favorite songs.

And here is a letter, dealing with a less famous German phrase, from Mrs. Frank D. Sheets, of Oregon, Illinois. She speaks of a German motto I quoted in this magazine for May, 1928.

About that time I bought in the double-decked main street of Thun, in Switzerland, a gaily decorated plate, which . . . bears the motto referred to, and I repeat it merely because the quoted version was not complete:

Ich bin der Herr im Hause—das war' gelacht:
Was meine Frau sagt—das wird gemacht!

I had thought the *Herrhood* of the Herr in a German household was too sacred a matter for jesting.

This is respectfully referred to foreign visitors who say that America is a wife-governed country. It seems there are others.

There are innumerable humorous definitions of the word *Optimist*. But the following, made in all seriousness, is new to me. Doctor A. J. Howell, of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bay Port, Mich., writes me that two High School girls got into a discussion, and referred to him for a decision. "An optimist is one who doctors eyes and a pessimist one who doctors feet."

Here is a matter, interesting to all who take seriously English Grammar and good usage. In the August number of this magazine, I wrote two sentences, as follows:

"Instead of every nation being proud of its various wars," and "the fact of one rich man going to prison."

These sentences drew a courteous and valuable letter from Mrs. Marion S. Irvin, of Washington, D. C.

With reference to the first sentence, she writes, "Is not the verb 'being proud' a gerund in this sense, and the object of the preposition 'of'? Thus, is not the noun 'nation' a modifying word which must assume the possessive form? It seems to me that this sentence has the same structure as 'Instead of me being proud of my various possessions' . . . 'the fact of one rich man going to prison filled the general public with amazement.' Here, to my mind, again the gerund 'going' is the object of the preposition 'of,' and the noun 'man' is a modifier which should take the possessive form."

Of course I immediately looked up the question in one of the best books of the age, "Modern English Usage," by H. W. Fowler, a book I recommend to all intelligent men and women. Not being absolutely satisfied, I wrote to Mr. Fowler himself (he lives in the green and pleasant land of Somerset) and he answered,

"*Amicus Plato* (*sive* W. L. P.), *magis amica veritas,* and I have very reluctantly to admit that I regard you as wrong, and the lady as right, on the question. But cheer up, those who hold with me are only a handful of faddists like myself . . . you can appeal to the great Jespersen. . . . It is a matter in which concessions and exceptions are fatal. Once allow, as you incline to do, that the wrong construction may be used provided the meaning is clear, and the wrong construction becomes so familiar that its wrongness, and the limitation to unambiguous contexts, are soon lost sight of altogether. The wrongness, however, is disputable, and for Jespersen *Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner.*"

Well, Professor Otto Jespersen of Copenhagen is one of the world's leading authorities on philology, linguistics, and Historical English Grammar; he is also a good personal friend of mine (not "of me"). But on matters of USAGE (always excepting "it is me" which Fowler calls "a lapse of no importance") I take Fowler's "Modern English Usage" as the best and final authority. (It is also one of the wittiest and most charming books I know.) Therefore I say publicly that *I have sinned.* I was wrong, Marion Irvin is right. I am grateful to her and to Mr. Fowler.

And now that we are discussing good usage, may I enter a protest against the expression "like he did"? This is practically universal in British oral speech, though by no means so common in good British books. It is becoming more common in America. It is bad, very bad. Please say either "as he did," or "like him," or use the formal and Biblical "like as we are."

Another and more common error is the expression "I would like" as "I would like to see you." All you have to do is to remember that "I would like" is ALWAYS WRONG, and that "I should like" is ALWAYS RIGHT. Go, and sin no more.

To those who love adverse book-reviews, let me recommend the following, quoted by the late Lord Oxford. After

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reading Kinglake's "History of the Crimean War," Gladstone wrote,

> Kinglake is fit to be a brilliant popular author, but quite unfit to be an historian. His book is too bad to live and too good to die. As to the matter most directly within my cognisance, he is not only not too true, but so entirely void of resemblance to the truth that one asks what was really the original of his picture.

Another reference to Parnell, who is ever with me. Mr. T. P. O'Connor says one thing that indicated Parnell's nervousness and abnormality was his sudden rage if he tried to write with a pencil that would not write. Well, well! if that is a sign of anything, I am it; you should hear me when I try to write with either pen or pencil that won't behave! Parnell threw the implement across the room. I grind it to powder beneath my feet, with language appropriate to the occasion. The collar-button that eludes pursuit, the pen that won't write, the shoestring that breaks—that way madness lies. Every woman knows what men are.

When I took my first bicycle tour in Germany, I noticed that the German wheelmen carried a whip in a receptacle attached to the handle-bars. Upon inquiry, it was for dogs. I carried no whip, for I found a more excellent way. When chased by infuriated dogs, which happened three or four times every day, I waited till the monster got close. Then leaning over, I spit in his eye, becoming with practice uncannily accurate. The animal invariably retired. It wasn't the heat, it was the humidity.

Tracks in the Snow

By Katherine Garrison Chapin

Life passes lightly over like tracks in the snow
That are gone the next morning. Winds blow
Widely, carelessly filling the deep ruts and hollows,
For where the wind blows the soft snow follows.
The sun draws into the earth the foot's mark,
Shy hurried feet scampering into the dark,
Or the deep heavy print careful and slow
Of lonely feet hunting a path in the snow.
Even the close-pressed tread of lovers that interlace
Are gone in the morning leaving behind no trace.

So beauty and love go as lightly over,
Are done and die,
Leaving the earth barren,
The heart bleak and dry.
Only the deep cuts that break ground,
Only grief and pain,
Last longer, and leave a mark;
Only scars remain.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Jake Adams, Sourdough"

BY WILL JAMES

ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

OLD Jake was a bachelor, the folks around called him a confirmed bachelor, which I guess means that there was no hopes of his ever being anything else. He was a little over twenty when he first started batching, which was when he left his home grounds in New Mexico and rode north into Wyoming to start in the stock business for himself.

On the banks of Willow Creek which runs into Green River, Jake had took a Squatter's right and built himself a two roomed log house with a stone fireplace in the centre, bought a lot of grub and proceeded to accumulate a herd. From then on, Jake's meals and bed had been of his own making, all excepting when he joined some cow outfit during round ups, or went to town once or twice a year for a load of grub or such, in town the restaurant and hotel bed had to do.

Of course there was such other times too when he went to different doings or "shindigs" at some school-house on the river, but that was only during his first few years of batching. Folks tell of how Jake had come pretty close to tying to one of the fair sex a couple of times then but somehow something had happened each time that made him coil back the loop that only needed a flip. The words "will you" had never come— For some reason, that only Jake knowed, he'd shed clear of the double harness and settled down in a rut, which even tho it didn't lap over with all life has that a feller can gather, it all seemed to hold what he wanted and he'd never looked for more.

He had his place, and range, his cattle and his horses. Once or twice a week he'd ride twenty some odd miles to the post office and he'd ride back with a sack full of newspapers, and magazines. Them was his company, and by the fireplace of evenings and following the printed lines he traveled in strange countries and got the slant on other people and lives. Old Jake could talk on any subject with any man and stump many men on many of them subjects.

But with all his knowledge and wise views on things in general which he'd accumulated Old Jake, in his thirty years or more of batching, had never somehow hankered for anything other than what he had, maybe there's the proof of his wisdom, but anyway, his pleasure in life was to have things the way he wanted 'em, he had sense enough not to want too much, so that was easy. His idea of real living was in seeing a bunch of his cattle in tall feed. Another one of his weaknesses was in riding fat saddle horses thru his range, his own little country. What little fencing was on his place was up tight and no wires was sagging, his gates was tall and made of peeled poles, and it was another pleasure to him to see how easy they swung open or shut.

Everything on the ranch had been made by Jake's own hands, the stables

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and sheds was of hewed logs and grooved in a way that'd make a cabinet maker look at 'em twice and wonder, the corrals and outside managers sort of blended in amongst the cottonwoods by the creek and all made a picture that only added on to the beauty of what nature had already put there.

Then a hundred yards or so up a grassy slope stood Jake's two roomed log house. It looked like a safe bet against any kind of weather and there was something about it that'd invite a feller in wether it was hot or cool. No tin cans was seen on the way up to it, and if a feller was to look around, which he'd be bound to do, the first thing that'd attract his attention would be a water wheel on the creek which, by some idea of Jake's, pumped the water out of a little spring by the hillside into a tank by the house. The surplus water went to irrigate a little weedless garden, that garden was all the ploughed soil on Jake's land—the sourdough wasn't much on disturbing the natural sod.

Anybody looking at Jake's place and studying it a spell would know what sort of a man he was. There was everything about it all that showed how the sourdough was a crank in the way he done things. His pleasure was in doing 'em well and pleasing to the eye, not only that but handy and everything working perfect from the squeezer where he branded his cattle to the rack in the stable where his saddle layed. He could of saddled his horse in the middle of the night without a light and not miss the touch of his riggin by half an inch, it was the same with everything else about Jake's place and like most of the bachelor cowmen of the range countries. They have to know where things are because there's nobody around to tell 'em if anything is lost or mislayed, but the advantage there is that once a thing is put it stays put.

Things was in the same order in that house of Jake's. He could of come in there out of a bone chilling blizzard, closed the door, and in half a minute have a roaring fire to thaw out by. There was always pitch kindling topped with a big armful of wood in the fireplace and it was always ready for a match any time. It wasn't only for himself that he'd have things ready that way, there was others who might ride in and be in need of some warmth mighty quick.

Any other sourdough (bachelor) or passing cowboy could of found things in Jake's house near as quick as he could find 'em himself, all have about the same lay. Any rider could of come and warmed up and cooked hisself a meal with one hand and both eyes shut. As for old Jake he could of been blind and found everything without fumbling once. Then again with all so handy for them what knowed where to look there was a cleanness about everything that'd make many a lady wonder about her own kitchen. There was no starched tablecloth on the table but the oil cloth looked just as clean, so did the baking-powder cans with the holes in the lid that was used for salt and pepper shakers. There was no paint on the wide cottonwood-board floor, no paint on the windows, and no curtains, the bed-spread on the bed in the little room adjoining was only a big tarpaulin canvas, and glancing at it all a feller wouldn't get no feeling of the kind that mahogany and overstuffed stuff would give but there was something about the whole of it that'd invite a feller to rest without fear of scratching a polished surface or upsetting the fish bowl, and all was clean, all was where Jake could put out his hand and reach for whatever

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he wanted without wondering where it was.

With all that was his, his place, his cattle, his horses and everything the way he wanted it to be, Jake had let the world slide by and enjoyed things the way he liked best. He shipped a little bunch of beef every fall and they always topped the market, and his earnings was so that when the income tax came in style he had to hunt up somebody to help him fill out a blank, the taxes he paid evened up well with what one of his steers would bring.

That's the kind of rut, if it can be called a rut, that Jake was into when a neighbor cowman rode up one day and caught the sourdough figgering from a calendar and taking 1874 from 1927. The neighbor helped him out on the figgures and the both of 'em allowed 53 was the difference. That was Jake's age and close as he could remember, that day was his birthday. A little brown jug was drug out from under the tarpaulin covered bed and the two lived back many years for many hours.

"Sure a nice little place you got here Jake" says the neighbor as he saddled his horse to leave late the next day "you sure done a powerful lot of work on it too, but" he added on "don't you hanker to travel around a little bit once in a while? you sure could afford it now it seems to me like."

"Yep, I reckon I could afford it" says Jake "but all my hankerings are right here. There's no place else in the world where things are the way I want 'em and I've seeded down here so that if I was to budge out it'd be like as if both my arms and legs would have to be cut off and my heart out. I belong to the place that much—then again" he went on "if I went any place else I'd only get restless for the want of things that suit me. I've got 'em here and there's nobody around to disturb what I've planted or built, and say" says Jake sort of wanting to change the subject, it was all too deep even for him to figger out, "I wish you'd seen that last bunch of steers I shipped out."

"I know now why Old Jake never got married" says the neighbor grinning to himself as he rode away. He opened the big gate and looked back at the place and shook his head "sure is a pretty place." But the thoughts of Jake and the place all went out of his mind soon as he turned his horse towards home, something else had come to him sudden and which would need considerable figgering, and that was to explain to his wife how come he was gone two days instead of one.

He was letting his horse pick his own way towards the home grounds and thinking deep on the subject, when from his right a ways came the purr of a motor and looking the direction where the sound came from he spotted an automobile stopped at the creek crossing, a man was out waving for him and the cowman rode over to see what was wanted.

He noticed as he rode closer that there was two ladies in the car, one sort of stocky setting in the back seat and the other, a younger lady setting in the front one, he figgered at a glance that the youngest one was the man's wife and the oldest to be the mother of either one or the other.

"Well what can I do for you" says the cowman as he spurred his shying horse closer to the car.

It seemed like there was nothing much he could do only to tell them where was the closest place they could put up for the night. A boulder at the creek crossing had bent the axle till both

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

front wheels was near running into one another. The boulder had went on thru, cracked the battery and stripped a few other things before the car could be stopped.

"Better shut off your car till you see if you have any oil in the crank case, John" says the lady in the back seat.

That done, the cowman told 'em of Jake's place, "It's about three quarters of a mile up the creek, and most likely he could haul your car to town with a team for you."

"Lucky we don't have far to walk anyway" says the man John after the cowman rode away.

So, that's how come that Jake, while bringing in some kindling that evening, seen three people walking up the trail along the creek towards his house. He just had time to put his kindling away and touch things up a little inside when the three came to the door. Jake was about to say "howdy" and kindly invite the folks in when he was interrupted by the stocky lady who'd clasped her hands, rolled her eyes, and remarked.

"My, isn't this a charming little house."

Then getting a glimpse of Jake standing in the door she smiled and introduced herself and the others, she followed that up with telling how their car broke down, then she went on to ask if he could put them up for the night, they hadn't brought no camp nor grub with 'em.

"I expect you folks are powerful hungry" Jake chips in, "and if you'll all wait a spell I'll have the best I can gather up on the table for you."

Jake went inside after telling 'em to make themselves at home and to come in or set on the porch as they wished. In two minutes Jake had the old stove throwing a cooking heat, the coffee was on, then he sliced some bacon, put it in the pan and out of some cool place, which was arranged from the spring, he brought out half a dozen good sized speckled trout, rolled 'em in flour and sizzled 'em in bacon grease. Adding on warmed over sourdough bread, a dish of prunes and some tomato preserves it all tallied up to what Jake called a meal. He could of done better he thought, but maybe the folks was too hungry to wait. As it was he called 'em to the table fifteen minutes after he started his fire. He escorted 'em to the home made chairs around the home made table and told 'em to "go to it."

"Gracious" remarked the stocky lady "I never expected anything like this, and trout too, so crisp and nice." Then she looked up at Jake and says, "John is right at home where there's trout, he's a regular fiend when it comes to fishing."

"Yes" says John taking a mighty mouthful of said trout "I like to eat 'em but I'd rather ten to one fish for 'em, where there is any. I expect there's lots of 'em out here tho."

"Not so many" says Jake "this creek's been fished out long ago, but I've been planting some here in a pool up the creek every year and I manage to get a few once in a while."

"Well, that's good" says John, then "I don't suppose you'd mind if I went to catch a mess of 'em early in the morning."

"Oh yes, do that John" chips in the chunky lady "and I'll cook 'em myself."

Old Jake could only smile in favor of all of that, there was nothing else he could do.

After a lot of compliments on Jake's cooking and how good the trout and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sourdough bread tasted the meal finally come to an end. Jake then told 'em to make themselves at home some more and to take it easy, he'd wash the dishes, but Mrs. Potter, which was the stout lady's name, begin to argue with Jake on that subject and said she'd wash the dishes and her daughter could wipe 'em.

"Well, I don't mind doing dishes" says Jake getting busy with the dish pan as he talked "I sure hadn't ought to anyway, I've been doing 'em for about thirty years now."

"Have you really?" says Mrs. Potter. "Gee, you must of been widowed young."

"No maam" says Jake squirming a little "I've never been married."

"Haven't you?—well"— Then after a while she went on "I've been widowed nearly ten years, and now all I have left is this married daughter of mine, but I'm afraid" she glanced at the girl and smiled a little, mostly to Jake, "I'm afraid now" she said once more "that they're trying to get rid of me, you know how young married folks are."

Mrs. Potter grabbed a dish towel and went to wiping dishes. Jake had beat her to the job of washing 'em, and he seemed awful busy and interested in that dish pan, specially when John and his wife got up and walked out, as they said to watch the sunset.

Being left alone with a talkative lady wasn't Jake's idea of a too pleasant time. There was many other things he'd rather look forward to, and the dishes begin to rattle out of the pan in pretty fast time. The lady talked on not at all hindered by Jake's record speed. When things got too hot there by the sink he'd have an excuse of going to the stove for something or other and then the table.

The dishes was no more than done and put away when he begin to fix up places for the folks to sleep. He rolled his bed and set it out on the porch, got clean blankets out and fixed up the one big bed he was using and a couch in the kitchen, then he managed somehow to chip in a few words edge-ways to tell Mrs. Potter where they was to sleep. The young folks was still missing.

"In the morning" Jake went on, after he'd managed to get a holt with a few words "I'll ride over to a neighbor of mine about fifteen miles from here and telephone for a tow car to come and get you. I'd take you in myself but it's pretty slow work with a team, and besides all my work horses are out on the range and it'd take time to get 'em."

"Don't go to putting yourself out too much for us Mister Adams" says Mrs. Potter. "We don't mind staying here a day or so" she smiled at him "that is if you don't mind our company."

"Sure not, glad to have you" says Jake. He edged on out to the porch, grabbed his roll of bedding, and saying good night walked on down the path towards a big cottonwood by the corrals where he unrolled his bed, pulled out the makings for a smoke, and after a while, as darkness came over the land he crawled in to stargaze at the stars.

It was along about the middle of the night, and Jake was dreaming that John was cutting down his corral poles for fire-wood, then along came Mrs. Potter with a basketful of Squirming trout that splashed water all over his face, and Jake woke up. It was raining and not a star could be seen.

It was still raining when daybreak come, and as the sourdough cowman stuck his head out from under the tarp' to investigate the sky, he seen where there was no chance of it quitting, not

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for that day anyway. Jake listened for any sound from the house and a hoping somebody would be up so he could go in and have his coffee, but no sound come, and pulling the tarp' back over his head he tried to go to sleep some more, but it was his time to get up and the best he could do was to doze off and on till Mrs. Potter moved. Her bed was on the couch in the kitchen and there was no going in for Jake till he knowed for sure she did move.

It was, what seemed to Jake, a couple of hours later when he stuck his head out from under the tarp' once more and still no sound come that'd tell him Mrs. Potter or the young folks was up, but he couldn't stand to be in bed any longer so he dressed under the canvas and got up, then went to get the "wrango" horse that was picketed in tall grass, saddled him up, and rode out to run in a few saddle horses. He roped himself a big brown horse, led him in the stable, and while that pony took on very unnecessary mouthfuls of bluejoint old Jake puttered around and finally went to saddling him. He even brushed the slick hide of that pony, and that was sure unnecessary too, but Jake liked to see the brush over the big dapples, and besides he was trying to kill time.

He killed some more time by going down to the corral to give a look at them ponies that was still in it, a big yellow slicker over his shoulders he gave them all a good look, that satisfied him some, after a while he opened the corral gate and let 'em out and gave another long look as the good feeling ponies played and bucked thru the rain to their feeding grounds. He then led the little wrango horse, which had been tied up, back to the picket log, he picked up the long rope that was fastened to it and fingered one of its strands, it was wearing out close to the knot and Jake cut out the weak part and tied a new "turkshead." He stood and watched the pony graze a while and then walked down to the creek where he took off his slicker and begin to wash up. There was a little bridge close by and he noticed as he reached down with cupped hands for water that one of the timbers underneath was beginning to rot. He'd have to get another peeled log to put in the place of it soon.

A few minutes later found Jake heading back for the stable again, he stood in the door and watched the rain come down and once in a while he'd turn to look at the big slick brown horse a chewing away on the good hay. All with the looks of that pony, the clean dry stable, and then the smell of good clean moisture outside which promised more tall grass, it all was to Jake a picture with a feeling of peace and plenty.

Jake was sniffing at the air and letting his eyes complete things up when from up towards the house came sounds that made him stop his sniffing and looking, instead he begin to listen, and pretty soon the sound came again.

"Yoo hoo—yoo hoo—Mister Adams."

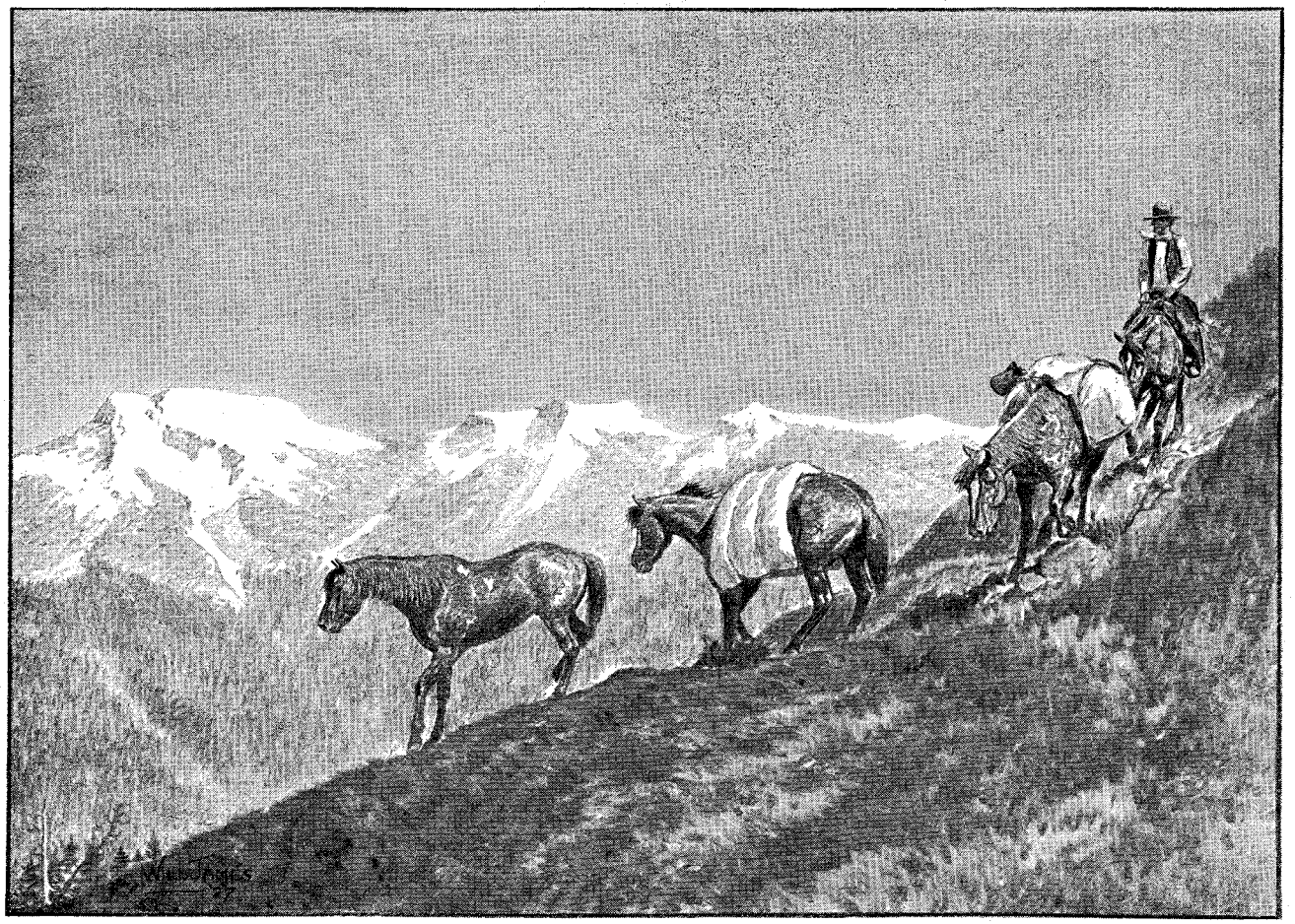
Jake mumbled something as he came out of the stable on towards the path to the house. When he got up there he found the door part open and as he walked in he come near running into the smiling Mrs. Potter.

"Good morning" says Jake "I hope you all had a good sleep."

"Oh yes indeed" says Mrs. Potter. "I never slept so well in my life, and in a strange place too."

Jake hadn't heard what Mrs. Potter said, he'd smelled coffee, and sure enough there was the steaming coffee pot on the stove and seemed like waiting for him, and better than that, the

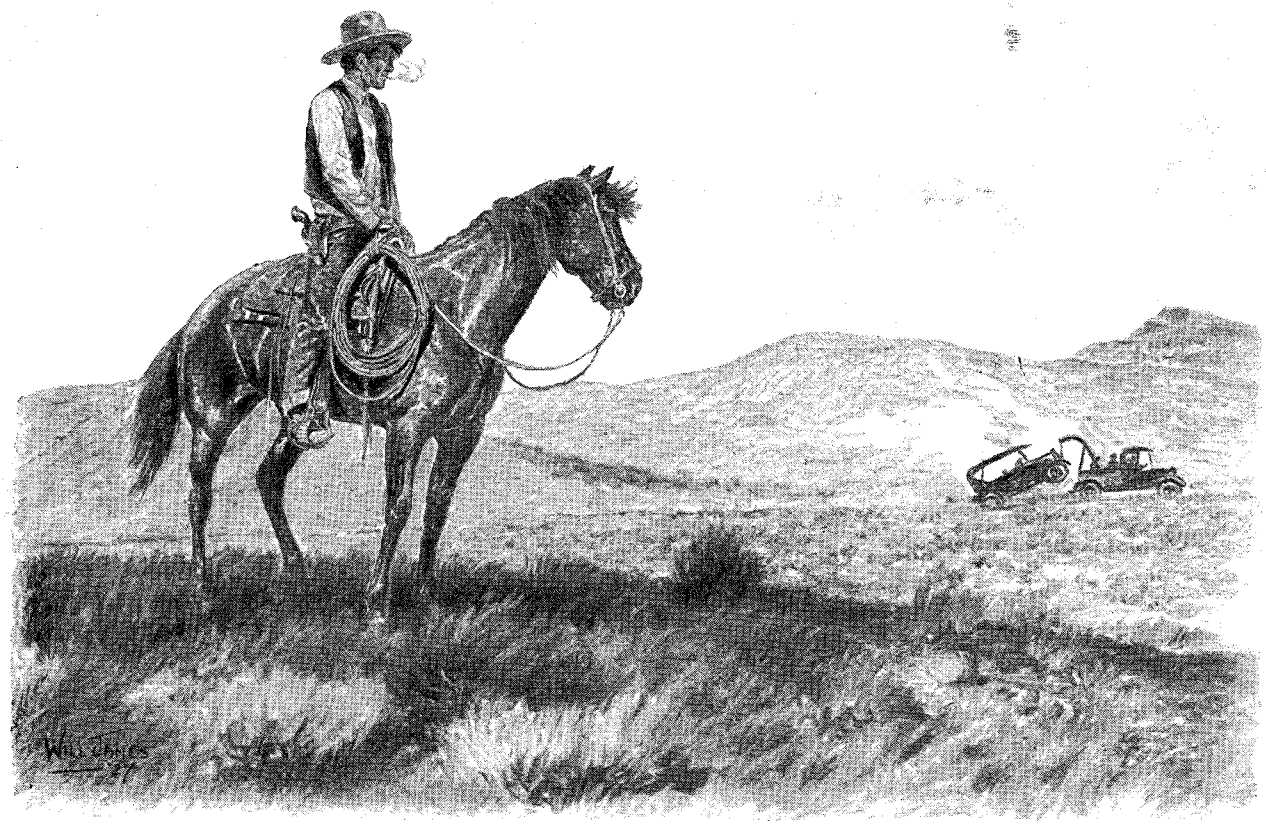
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



He was a little over twenty when he left his home grounds in New Mexico and rode north to start in the stock business for himself.—Page 601.

From a drawing by Will James.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



It was along about the middle of that same afternoon that Jake himself topping a ridge seen two cars, one pulling another, aheading the direction of town.—Page 616.

From a drawing by Will James.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

table was all set and ready, a steaming hot breakfast was also waiting, and at the sight Jake's eyes sort of lit up.

Mrs. Potter had watched his face and seemed mighty pleased.

"I thought of surprising you with a taste of somebody else's cooking" she says "you know even the best of cooks get tired of their own cooking, and being that John caught such a nice mess of trout I couldn't help but cook them. Just think" she went on "John had been out fishing ever since six o'clock and in this rain too, my! ain't this weather just simply awful?"

Jake grunted, and after all the others had set down he took his seat and begin reaching for his coffee cup, he was over two hours late on it and he was aching for a swallow, but Jake was due for disappointments, the first swallow he took of the coffee made him think of the rank sulphur spring that was up in his pasture, his horses never touched it.

"Gee mother" says John's wife "you certainly outdone yourself in making coffee this morning, I never tasted such good coffee."

Jake come near snorting at that, but instead he just looked at the young lady to make sure she wasn't joking, she sure enough wasn't, and then he got to thinking most likely it was his taste which might be altogether different than other folkses'. To him it tasted like it had too much coffee and not enough boiling or else too much boiling and not enough coffee, but anyway there was sure something wrong and he sure didn't enjoy it, then he got to thinking, it must be his taste, because he didn't remember of going anywheres and getting coffee that suited him, not unless it was at some cow camp or of his own making, but anyway it was too late for him to change his taste now even if it might be different than others, so he swallowed the coffee the best way he could and let it go at that. He thought once of having one of them good looking biscuits to help along but that only made things worse "she must of put baking powder in the sourdough" thought Jake.

The trout and fried potatoes was nearest to his liking than anything and after a little helping of each, no more coffee, Jake allowed he had enough and got up from the table remarking that it was the finest breakfast he'd ever et.

"If you folks will excuse me now" he went on "I'll ride over to that neighbor of mine and see if I can get a car to tow you folks back to town, I don't reckon I'll be able to get back till to night, but you folks make yourselves to home, and most likely you can pull out of here by to morrow if you want."

"That's mighty good of you helping us out that way Mr. Adams" says Mrs. Potter "but couldn't John here go in place of you?"

Jake thought of his big brown horse with a green stranger on him who didn't know how to ride, and says "Thanks Maam, but on account of him being a stranger around here I don't reckon he could find the place."

"Fine" says John "I can go get another mess of trout."

With that ringing in his ears old Jake walked out of the house to the stable, a big bear trap was hanging on the corner of that stable and as he walked by he spotted it and stopped, then grunted and went on to get his horse.

It was late in the afternoon when Jake, after riding thru heavy rains and flooded creeks, got back to his place. He'd got the long distance call to town o.k. but he was told there at the garage that on account of swollen creeks and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

many bridges washed out on the way they couldn't possibly send a tow car out for many days, maybe a week.

Jake had hated to come back with that kind of news, but as he walked in the house and begin to spread the meaning of 'em, he seen that his fear of disappointing 'em had been for nothing. Mrs. Potter didn't seem at all mournful about it and didn't want to even waste a breath on the subject. Soon as Jake came in she dropped a magazine she'd been reading and begin to make a place by the stove for Jake to set and dry. Even his telling her that he was dry as powder didn't check her none.

John's wife was setting by a window and showed a little interest as Jake came in but she soon turned back to her task again, she'd also been reading a magazine, it must a been a magazine they brought with 'em because Jake couldn't recognize the cover, on it was the picture of two young people, looked like they was making love or something, Jake's gaze sort of wandered around some from there till it came to the table, on it was a big panful of trout, his raising, all cleaned and ready to fry. At the sight of them he begin to wonder where the other party was, but he didn't have to wonder long, there came a sort of rumble from the next room and then a choking noise like you hear when a rope tightens up on a critter's wind pipe.

"Oh John, John, turn over" it was the good wife speaking. John turned over and all was quiet.

Things was so quiet that, between spells when Mrs. Potter tried to start a conversation, Jake could hear the clock ticking. He sort of listened to the ticking in a hazy way, and then it came to him that the sound didn't come from the usual place. He glanced at the shelf in the corner where the clock had been and spotted a looking glass there instead, the clock was on top of the home made cupboard, and that cupboard, he noticed there was something wrong with it, it was all decorated up with fancy cut newspaper a hanging over the shelves, just right, he thought, to lap in the gravy bowl as it was put in there.

The dishes was all piled up in there in neat ways sure enough, but daggoned hard to get at, and he wondered what was the idea of tipping some of them dishes on edge like it'd been done at the back, they'd sure slide to the floor and break sometime, and them cups a hanging by their handles to little hooks, what happened to them what had the handles broke off?——

All the cans Jake had saved to keep things in and labelled had disappeared and after a lot of looking around he found 'em in a box in a corner, seemed like ready to take out and dump. The whole inside of the house seemed transformed, it was good to look at in a way, but it sure wasn't handy, not to his way of thinking. The atmosphere of the place was changed and he figgered that the company around had something to do with it, but somehow it didn't look like his place no more, he sort of felt like he was in a stranger's home, and the more he looked around the more he seen how it'd take him a powerful long time to set things to right again and the way he wanted 'em.

It looked awful dark inside too, even for a cloudy rainy day like it was, and the reason of that he seen was curtains on the windows, he had to lean ahead on his chair to make sure they was curtains, and they was. A big bolt of sheeting which he'd bought to line the ceiling of the place with had been found and some of it cut up for that purpose. "Well" thought Jake "I can use 'em

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for dish towels after they're gone, I need some new dish towels anyway."

Jake wondered what they'd done in the other room, but he figgered he'd seen enough to do him for a while, as it looked now even, it seemed like he was out of a house and home. He thought on the subject for quite a spell and then it came to him that after all the lady sure must of meant well. Yep, too well, anyway he figgered maybe he ought to show some appreciation of the work they done on the place wether he liked it or not.

He noticed Mrs. Potter a setting there reading and like she was sure enough waiting to hear a word from him and Jake swallowed a couple of times so he could speak.

"Quite a change in this place" he says.

Mrs. Potter kind of jumped up at that, turned in her chair, and faced old Jake with a smile.

"Well, it's about time you noticed it" she says. "Here, I've been working like a slave all day so to have things all done before you got back. You men keep things in such funny places," she went on "but I don't expect you have time straightening a house much when you have so much outside work to do —and nobody to cook for you."

That all was quite a blow to Jake because he'd sure always prided hisself on keeping his house always in shape.

"Too bad I didn't know of your intentions, or I'd tried to talk you out of the work, it's pretty hopeless fixing this place up because it was only built for an old bachelor like me. It wouldn't be much of a place for a woman."

"Oh, I think it's a dandy place" comes back Mrs. Potter. "I had lots of fun fixing it up."

"I'm glad you got some fun out of it, but I wouldn't do any more because it ain't worth it, and besides you better rest up, you must of had a hard trip before you got here."

Jake had no more to say after that, but Mrs. Potter wasn't thru yet, she hadn't even started, she went on to tell of the beauty of a home when all is in harmony and everything is fixed right. She even brought her dead husband to life so as to back up her talk on what a home should be and all it meant. She painted a mighty pretty picture before she got thru, but to Jake the picture soon turned to wax and the colors begin to run like as if a lighted candle had been near. He was a *Confirmed* bachelor.

It rained all the next day after Jake's ride to the neighbor, that night it tried to clear up, but Jake prophecized that it'd rain some more the next day, "the sunset wasn't promising good weather yet," and Jake was right, it rained the next day as hard as ever, but as the sun went to setting that evening it looked like the storm had come to a long-winded end.

Jake took a long breath at the sight of the clear sunset, he'd never seen such a pretty sight he thought, and it was the first time in his life, specially at that time of the year when he'd wished for a rain to quit. The two days' heavy rain had been mighty hard on the bachelor, he'd seen his home changed into somebody else's and he'd been helpless to say anything against the changes. If anything he felt he had to make 'em think he liked it. Hospitality was a sacred thing to the sourdough, it was a Western law he lived up to more than any law ever made in courts, and he wouldn't of dreamed to do a thing that was against that law.

So Jake'd had to bear it all and smile.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One day he seen Mrs. Potter raise a lid on the stove and put one of his frying pans over the flame, getting the bottom of it all black, then again he seen her washing the frying pan that evening and she didn't wash the bottom nor the handle, that was something he was always careful of doing well, and when he looked at the paper against the wall where the frying pan hung he seen grease spots on them, grease that'd been dripping from them same pans. That never happened when *he* washed 'em.

But he was out of that job of washing, he'd been edged out of it for as long as they'd be there the same as he was edged out of lots of things that was his ever since they come. There was only one chair which he could come to in that house and use, it wasn't his old favorite cowhide chair either, John had appropriated that one. Everything else had been appropriated by either Mrs. Potter or her daughter till Jake felt the only place left for him was in one of them box stalls in the stable.

He'd come in one afternoon, while it was raining and after he'd stayed outside as long as he could, and found both of the ladies going thru his stack of books and magazines, they smiled and said they was straightening them up, but when he tried to find a certain book the next day he had to give it up. It was in that pile somewhere, but where?

Jake didn't want to get peeved at 'em because he knowed they was only thinking of doing him a good turn, but daggone it, he wished they wasn't so willing, and he wished Mrs. Potter would quit her hinting and telling on what all a bachelor missed in life and home and so on. That part of it was getting the best of him and he was for hitting the breeze often only he was afraid of what all they'd do to that place of his if he left.

Like one day he caught John bringing in an armful of pitch pine, something he used for kindling, Jake didn't say nothing, but the stove got awful hot and the next day it had to be all cleaned out of the soot that'd accumulated in there. Every day John kept a bringing trout, sometimes twice as much as could be used, and then one time that same gazabo went out with Jake's shot gun and brought in two sage chickens, one of them Jake recognized as the pet he'd had for two winters and which used to come and eat bread crumbs off the porch.

So, with all of that, it was no wonder that Jake drawed a long breath when the rain finally quit and the sun begin to dry things up, there was hopes of his getting rid of 'em then, he hoped, without having to tell 'em, but he would never tell 'em to go, that was against his religion.

Two days of sunshine along with a good breeze followed up. The creeks went down to normal again and the roads dried up plenty fit for travel in a car. On the morning of the third clear day Jake, figgering that the washed out bridges would all be repaired, saddled up his brown horse and went to start out for the neighbor again to telephone for the tow car, but Mrs. Potter met him at the corral gate.

"You seem awful anxious to get rid of us Mr. Adams" remarked Mrs. Potter sort of shy-like and smiling after Jake told her where he was headed. "And" she went on "I was just going to ask you where was the best place to pick berries. John says there's lots of 'em here, and I was going to pick some and make you some good jelly."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

So it wound up that Jake, instead of riding over to the neighbor, escorted Mrs. Potter to a berry patch. She remarked on the way how she'd like to get on a horse some time, if he had one gentle enough for her, "she hadn't rode since she was a little girl." Jake left her in a thick patch of berries, saying that he had to ride on to take a look at his stock.

The way it was now, and according to the way Jake felt about it, he wasn't to go for a tow car to get the folks out till they said they wished to go. The sourdough didn't want to have it seem that he'd like to have 'em go, not as much as he wanted to get rid of 'em, and it seemed like there was nothing for him to do only to wait and hope that they'd want to go soon.

But clear bright days followed on one after another and no sign came from Mrs. Potter or the young folks that they was anywheres near wanting to move. They'd settled down to stay seemed like. Jake had made 'em feel so welcome, and they all figgered that by bringing sunshine to the bachelor's, what they thought dreary, life they was doing a plenty to feel right in taking on the hospitality he offered.

Every day John kept a bringing trout till Jake thought sure no more was left in the pool. The wife would go with John sometimes on walks or hunting, they was having a fine time, and one evening they brought another one of Jake's pets full of shot, it was a big wild duck, one of 'em that'd been coming to the pool every year and bringing others. Jake had fed 'em and they'd all got so tame that they'd hardly notice him when he'd come to watch 'em.

Jake had got red in the face and come pretty near exploding at the sight of the dead duck but somehow he held himself and only wished something would happen that'd make the visitors vamoose before they done more damage. For days Mrs. Potter put up wild fruit and jelly, then the sugar run out, and on investigating, Jake seen where he'd also run out of other things, he'd have to go to town soon and stock up.

But all them things, as much as they disturbed the peace of the sourdough, wasn't what aggravated him most. He could of stood that maybe for a long spell but he sure couldn't bear the stand Mrs. Potter had took towards him, that lady was out to get Jake, and she'd got so bold in her hints towards the last few days that Jake didn't hardly dare come in the house, only at meal time. She'd cornered him one day and holding a jar of jelly to the light had made him look thru it to see how clear it was, then she'd say smiling her best as usual:

"If the way to a man's heart is thru his stomach this sure ought to get you Mr. Adams."

But that didn't faze Jake none at all, instead, as he layed in his bed under the big cottonwood that night and stared at the stars, he hoped they could help him plan a way out. Finally, after a lot of hard thinking one plan sort of shaped itself, but Jake didn't like it much. It struck him a whole lot like he was fighting prairie fire and him doing the "backfiring," fighting fire with fire and so on.

When that plan came to him again soon as he woke up the next morning he was less for it than the night before, and he was for forgetting about it and all other plans, he'd decided to play "freezeout" and let the folks stay till they was ready to go. All would of went well maybe and Jake would of stuck to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what he'd decided, but the well meaning Mrs. Potter went and made another big mistake, a mistake that Jake couldn't make himself overlook. He'd seen the lady take his sourdough crock and scour it out, the fine thick dough he'd been so careful to let accumulate on the inside of the crock, and which all added taste to the biscuits and flapjacks, was scraped out clean and soapy water took what was left.

The sight of that near broke Jake's heart, it hurt him even more than when John killed his pet sage chicken and duck, fished his trout stream dry, and many other things which had been none at all to Jake's liking.

All them things capped with the sight of the sourdough crock finally got under Jake's hide, he felt that he had to do something and mighty quick, and at breakfast that morning Mrs. Potter noticed that Jake was even quieter than usual. The truth of it was Jake was afraid to say anything, one word might start the landslide of the others which had accumulated and was aching to be off his chest, and the sourdough was still chewing on his last bite when he excused hisself and went out. The pile of tin cans that'd had been scattered to one side of the house and which he sighted only speeded him on to the stable and his brown horse, five minutes later he was riding out and as he rode he begin mapping out the plan which had come to him the night before.

Jake was gone all that day, Mrs. Potter went to work doing some more changes and surprising things which she figgered would be bound to show the sourdough what a change there was between batching and having somebody around who could make things homelike. She was at her busiest transforming one thing into another that afternoon when she heard footsteps on the porch. It couldn't be John, she thought, him and his wife was out hunting and wouldn't be back till dark, then she heard spurs ringing, and she thought of Jake, but it couldn't be him because Jake's spurs had a different sound. She left her work and hitting for the door she came face to face with a lady there in riding skirt.

Mrs. Potter's heart missed a beat as some kind of hunch made her size up the strange lady. She noticed that stranger was not near as stout as she was herself, that she was younger, and she had to admit that she was pretty to look at, specially in that riding outfit.

The lady introduced herself as Mrs. Farrell and said she'd rode over to see Mr. Adams. When she was told Mr. Adams was gone and nobody knowed when he'd be back, she remarked that she'd wait for him as she wanted to find out if she could throw her steers in with his when shipping time come.

Mrs. Farrell was invited in and it was only a short while later when, by hinting around, Mrs. Potter found out some disturbing things about the newcomer. She learned that Mrs. Farrell was also a widow and lived with a son up on a small ranch a few miles away, that she thought a great deal of Mr. Adams, how her and him run their cattle together and shipped at the same time. "He's certainly been a good neighbor" Mrs. Farrell had added on.

Mrs. Potter hadn't liked the sound of her voice when she said that, and when she glanced her way she noticed that Mrs. Farrell was sizing up the place in a sort of surprised look.

"I see there's quite a change here" says Mrs. Farrell. "It's not at all the way Mr. Adams usually keeps things" she smiled and looked at Mrs. Potter.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well, you see" says Mrs. Potter "Mr. Adams has been so good to us that I thought I'd fix the place up for him, men so seldom have time or know how" then she went on to tell how their car broke down at the creek crossing, and how they had to impose on Mr. Adams till they could get back to town again.

"I'm sure Mr. Adams must like your company" says Mrs. Farrell "and he appreciates anything anybody ever does for him, like for instance the way you fixed up the house, it looks very homelike, but" she hesitated some and smiled "knowing Mr. Adams like I do I'm afraid he would like it better the way it was— These bachelors out here are so particular about their cabins, more particular I think than most housewives, and their ideas how a cabin should be fixed is very different."

The talk between the two ladies went on for a while and then it begin to lag, came a time when words was few and far apart and Mrs. Potter went to finish up the work she'd started before the interruption come. Somehow she had no heart to keep on with the job no more, she wished she could quit, but most of all she wished that lady hadn't come, because with her around she'd of a sudden felt sort of uncomfortable and put out.

She was glad when as evening come her daughter and son in law walked in the house. Fixing up supper kept her busy then, and when Mrs. Farrell asked to help her she took pleasure to let her know in her own way that she didn't need none of her butting in.

Supper over with, Mrs. Farrell walked out and in the dim light of the evening strolled around by the water wheel and down the creek to Jake's well kept corrals and stables. Jake was sure a crank on the way his place must be, and she had to smile a little at the thought of how the transformation of his cabin must of struck him. It was dark when she went back to the house. Mrs. Potter and the young folks was reading by the lamp and not one raised a head or offered a chair as she walked in.

Not a one suggested any help as she hunted for blankets or a place to bed down for the night. But Mrs. Farrell only smiled at that, she didn't need no help, and went on to fix herself a bed in the best way she could.

But, on account of the bed not being any too comfortable, Mrs. Farrell didn't sleep any too well that night. She was up an' around before any of the others when morning come and begin to make breakfast. The coffee grinder made a noise at an unreasonable hour for Mrs. Potter and the others, and when all of 'em come up to take a hand there was nothing for 'em to do but set down and eat.

They was hardly thru eating when Mrs. Farrell followed up her lead and proceeded to wash the dishes. Mrs. Potter wasn't much for helping her but she finally did and she noticed as Mrs. Farrell put away the dishes and things that they was being put away in places where Jake had been keeping 'em, not where Mrs. Potter had moved 'em.

The house was being swept up when Mrs. Potter begin talking to John who was setting on the porch and whittling, as she went on she remarked how she wished the car was fixed so they could get back to town.

"You and Jennie had a pretty good vacation now" she says "and I think we better go."

But John wasn't anxious seemed like, there was such good fishing and hunting around. They maybe would of decided on staying even longer but Mrs.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Farrell who'd overheard the conversation came in on 'em about that time, and seeming anxious to help, offered to ride over and telephone for a car to come and get 'em.

Mrs. Potter hadn't figgered on being heard, but she wasn't put out much by that, she only smiled sarcastic like at Mrs. Farrell and said:

"Very good of you, my dear—I wish you would."

So, that's how come when along about noon the next day, a tow car with room for passengers drove to the door at Jake's place. Mrs. Potter seemed mighty glad to see the car come, she'd been waiting and ready. She'd even talked John into sticking around and not go fishing no more, and after a hurry-up noon meal Ma Potter piled in the tow car followed by Jennie and John. Mrs. Farrell waved an unanswered good by to them as the car started away and then she went into the house and worked the whole afternoon a trying to put things back to the way she remembered Jake having 'em.

It was along about the middle of that same afternoon that Jake himself topping a ridge seen two cars, one pulling another, a heading the direction of town. The sourdough shook his head in wonder and smiled, then reined his brown horse the direction of his place on a high lope. When he got there and walked in the door he shook his head again, smiled, and wondered some more. Mrs. Farrell was taking off the finishing touches and Jake's place very near looked like his own once more.

"Daggone it" says Jake losing his smile "I sure don't feel any too proud of myself for putting you to so much trouble, Mrs. Farrell, your posing as a widow just on account of an old sourdough a wanting to get rid of a designing old woman and her brood, but I was desperate Mrs. Farrell. I was desperate, and" he looked around the place "I never figgered you'd go as far as to even fix up the house like it was, I——"

"Now, Jake you keep quiet and stop your apologizing" interrupts Mrs. Farrell. "I had a lot of fun out of this, and come to think about doing anybody a favor, I guess you never go to no trouble for anybody, do you? I guess you forget the time you practically saved all our cattle by letting my husband have the hay he needed so bad that hard winter a few years ago. You didn't have any too much hay for your own cattle that year if I remember right, and I guess I can remember many other good turns you done us Jake, and if you don't keep quiet I'll tell you about 'em."

Jake did keep quiet, that is as far as that subject was concerned, but he talked on pretty well about the wonders of the performance and all the way while he escorted Mrs. Farrell to her home and husband, the trip was slow because back of the two saddles on both horses was gunnysacks full of jars filled with jellies and preserved wild fruits. Jake had insisted on Mrs. Farrell taking 'em, for as he'd remarked, his sweet tooth didn't allow no such stuff.

"And sometime" says Jake winking at Tom Farrell, after they both got at the cowman's home, "sometime Mrs. Farrell if you ever do happen to be a real widow why—I'll see that you'll never get *too* lonesome."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Spirit Speaking

(CHRISTMAS, 1929)

BY EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

As you are still pursuing it
  As blindly as you can,
You have deformed and tortured it
  Since ignorance began;
And even as you have mangled it,
  The Letter has killed man.

Because a camel cannot well
  Go through a needle's eye,
No jealous God has ever said
  The son of man must die;
Only the God that you have made
  Has mocked you from the sky.

No God has in his mightiness
  Told you that love is fear;
And some of you, who are almost
  Too mighty to be here,
May fancy that you are not so—
  If only once a year.

As long as you contend with it
  For longer fear and pain,
As always you have injured it
  And angered it again,
A grief and a malevolence
  The Letter will remain.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Diary of Freckles Watson

BY DON MARQUIS

JULY 12th—Practised Throwing my Voice today and Dad come out into the garage and heard me and didn't let on for a couple of minutes and he says if he made noises like that at my age they would of give him Worm Medicine.

What, he says, is the game?

Nothing, I says.

Uh-huh, he says, but it's a good thing your Mother didn't hear you instead of me or you would be getting Treatment for it. Are you an Injun chief or an aerioplane or just a circus?

It is just something I was practissing, I says.

When you get perfect at it, he says, let me know and we will charge admission. If there is some kind of a Great Gift develluping in my family I might as well horn in and clame a persenttage. Has it got anything to do with swallowing marbles? The reason why I ask, Mr. Thompson said that your young friend Ferdy was making those kind of noises for three days and then he wound up by swallowing a marble. I can understand a year-old baby swallowing a marble, but by the time a child is as big as you and Ferdy, eleven years old, even the most exxperyinced parent expects him to have a little bit of sense. Come across now, Freckles, and tell me why you kids are making these gurgling noises all over the neighborhood. You even do it in your sleep. I won't give you away.

When the Old Man calls me Freckles I know he is on the square and I might as well tell him for he will get it out of me, but if he calls me Harold he is sore at me. He is a man of a great deal of pennytration, he would of made a good Detective himself if he had took it up early in life, so I come clean with him.

Yes, sir, I says, Ferdy Thompson and Tom Mulligan and me is all practissing Throwing our Voices, and Squint, I mean Ferdy, read in the wonder book about one of these old Greaks who stuttered and he wanted to be an orator and he put pebbles in his mouth so he could controll his voice in any direction, and Squint says, if Pebbles why not marbles?

I see, said my Old Man, you all want to be orators.

No, sir, I says, Detectives. And Squint's marble slipped day before yesterday and he felt it rolling through his vocal cords and lungs right down into his stomach.

They have had a lot of trouble getting it out of him, says my dad, and from what Mr. Thompson told me they have taken all his akoostics along with it. The doctor got his tonsils and addynoids too. But there is just one more question I want to ask you, Just how is Ventrillokism going to help you boys be Detectives?

My dad is the best dad I know, he will kid you along, and he wants to know what you are at, but he will not swell up and get A-Dult with you after you have come clean with the goods. But at the same time he is Grown Up and you got to draw the line some place. You would not feel at liberty to discuss Everything with him, after all an A-Dult is an A-Dult. I did not feel I could discuss with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him that we Three was allready practically Detectives right now, doing a good deal of Shadowing around Town, and that we had a Gun hid in our cave which we owned in pardnership, or how we had decided we would have to be Ventrillokists. For very often a Detective will throw his Voice to win the confidence of a gang of desperate Criminels. Quite often a strange Voice will break out amongst a gang of Criminels taunting them with all their innermost secrets and the cold sweat will gush out onto their brow, for each will think it is some other Criminel of the gang giving away their Secrets and pass words, and pretty soon they will gruvvil in terror and revele all, and some slick Detective is all the time Throwing his Voice to make them confess, and they never know just where the Voice has come from until click! click! he has snapped the bracelets onto them. And that was why we had been practissing throwing our Voice, but we had an Oath we would not tell All, so when my Dad asked what has Ventrillokism got to do with being Detectives, I said to him, Well, dad, it is like joo jittsu.

That makes it perfectly clear to me, he said. But don't practise it with marbles any more, come down to the drug store and I will give you gum drops and if they slip through your lungs into your stomach they will melt there and cause you no great inconvenience.

July seventeenth—Squint and Tom Mulligan and me went up to the Cave and practissed Joo jittsu and Throwing our Voice and a good deal of Shaddowing, and Squint is not so good at it since they snagged out his Tonsuls and addynoids. We took the Gun to pieces with a skrew driver to see why it would not work and parts of it will not come back together again.

And the dogs got sick eating some fried bullheads we caught and we could not make them hunt gophers and ground squirrels, and we needed these varmints for their hides, if we could sell enough of these varmints hides we could buy some cattridges for the Gun and then we could see if it would really shoot or not and we need these varmints hides also to make Parchmint out of for Squint says all the Secrets and Pass Words and rules of our Gang should be written down on parchmint and not paper and all our Oaths like the laws of the Meads and Pershings.

But to catch these varmints and make their hides into parchmint is not so easy as it would look to sivvilized people who know nothing of the rough life of the Wilds, these are cunning varmints and only old trappers of the wild know their onions when it comes to stalking down these varmints of the wild, and their are not so many old veterins left who can read the signs of the wild.

We found some Injun arrow heads and practissed throwing our voices with them, and the voices came out like a forrin tongue. And Tom Mulligan says it was probilly the language the Injuns that shot them arrow heads used, Cherrowkee and Soo, and other languages of the wild, and we went in swimming and went and laid down under the cattle guards on the railroad track and let the 4 o'clock passenger train run over us a ft. above our heads and got hot ashes and hot water onto our backs, but many a time a Detective or scout has to take such perrilous risks as that and an Injun brave never allows an enimy to taunt him with pain.

And after that there was a row about the Cave between Mull the Black Hearted and Squint Thompson the Terror of the plains and Mull says, All right, Come

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out into the smoke with me, we will shoot it out!

And what they were rowing about was this. It is a Horse Thieves cave. Its a sure enough Cave that was really used by Horse Thieves way back in the early days. They used to steal horses and hide them out in it, and then on dark nights they would take them over to the Miss. river which is about 30 miles West of the little Ill. town where we live and raft them down to Kayro or Saint Lewis and sell them. I heard my grand-dad tell how just before the Sivvle War a bunch of Peaseable Settlers in our County ganged up and crashed into those Outlaws and whang! whang! whang! three of them bit the dust and two others they caught and strung up and the rest got away and went West. And everybody had forgot for years where that Cave was. But one day me and Mull and Squint was wading up the Crick and we found the entrance right in the high crick bank all grown over with grape vines and wild blackberry bushes. Some of the beams in the top was busted down and we had to clean a lot of sand and gravvle and rubbish out of it, and we kept it secret for our own gang of Three.

And what the quarrel was about was that Mull says his Grand-dad was one of the vigilance that helped break up that gang of Outlaws, and Squint says, Shucks, that is nothing, one of my grand-dads was one of the Outlaws himself. He was one of the ones that went West and joined Frank and Jessie James.

This claim made bad feeling, because Squint every now and then acts quite supperior to everybody else and tries to put acrost how important his annsestors was. Once he claimed he had Injun blood into him, and pretended he found a lot of pale-face scalps in the attic that had been handed down from gennera-tion to genneration for hair-looms in his family. And there was trouble about that with me, for I says it don't make any difference about annsestors in this country or noble blood or hair-looms it is what a man is himself that counts.

And Mull says if we did right we would tell the Boy Scouts about this Cave anyhow.

Yes, says Squint, and some of them would tell the Girl Scouts. They would have sunday school picknicks in it the first thing you know.

Well, says Mull, we are Boy Scouts, and we ought to tell.

Listen, says Squint, don't we do our Good Deeds all right? Well, then, after we have done our one Good Deed a day we are entitled to be Outlaws or Detectives or Rum Runners or Pirates or Injuns or Hi-Jakers the rest of the time, and that's that.

Well, says Mull, I feel sometimes it ain't honnorable to be a Boy Scout and an Outlaw at the same time.

Well, said Squint, it is Stratigy. Either gang we are with we have got inside stuff onto the movements of the Enemy. The only real kick I got against the Boy Scouts is they never seem to have any Enemy, they are supposed to be friends of Everybody and help them out. And what fun are you going to have with a real Outlaws cave like this if you don't have any Enemy? And one word like that led to another till Mull says come out into the smoke with me. Which meant they walloped each other at fifteen paces with green apples.

July nineteenth—This is one of the most historicle days in the history of our lives, dear Diary, and it should be written down in Blood in the annels of our history, and I am burning the midnight oil to set the history of this day down before I go to sleep, I have crawled out of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bed and am writing by the dim light of the flash light Dad sometimes carries in the pocket of the car, for great evvents will transpire from the annels of this day.

Because, dear Diary, it was this Afternoon we made the great Gold Discovery, which as yet no Enemy nor A-Dult is wise to.

Me and Mull and Squint was laying in the grass near the swimming hole up by the Cave and Squint says what would you do if you had a million dollars?

Mull says the first thing I would do I would buy an Aerioplane and would become the first Aerioplane Detective.

Squint sniffed and Mull says Yes, maybe you would sniff the same sarcastic way at Lindburg, huh? That shows who is the real dum bell.

Lindy ain't a Detective, says Squint, what would you do, Freckles, speaking to me.

I knew anything I would say Squint would say something a good eal slicker, so I says, Where are us Three going to get a Million Dollars? Maybe you think those old Horse Thieves hid their savings in the Cave over there.

I never heard such a dum bell idea Squint says. But I saw it was exactly what he was thinking of and he was sore because I said it first.

Why is it a dum bell idea? I says to Squint. Any more than Captain Kidd burying his treasure, and everybody knows he buried those Spanish galloons up and down the Spanish main all the way from Boston to Florida. Millions and millions of galloons have been dug up in chests with skeletons and old fashioned swords and horse Pistols.

You are a dum bell says Squint, it wasn't galloons, it was dubloons.

Mull says it was galloons because he had seen pictures of them labelled that way.

Whichever it was, I said, they are all the time digging them up.

Mull says what did he want to bury them for anyhow?

They are all haunted, I says. He buried them so he could haunt them when he died.

Huh! says Squint. What would he want to do that for?

I often wondered about that myself, but Mull knows all about Ghosts. His grown up sister Ella has one of these weegee boards and can make the table tip.

Mull says a Ghost haunts places after he dies so as to take his mind off of the fact that he is dead.

It don't stand to reason, says Squint, that Captain Kidd could be haunting all them different places from Boston to Florida all at the same time.

A human couldn't, says Mull, but a Ghost could as easy as pie. That is one of the main addvantages of being a Ghost. He can be haunting things simultanneous in every direction at the same time.

I don't see how, says Squint.

It is just like one of these Happyness Boys on a radio programm, Mull says. And it sounded reasonable to me, for it stands to reason a Ghost would have more electricity in him than a human being would, he is more open to it. But Squint sniffed sarcastic again and says Ghosts! Horse Thieves! Huh!

Well then, I says, if this Million dollars you are talking about hasn't anything to do with ghosts or horse thieves, what was it buried it then?

It was Science buried it when the world was made, says Squint.

Then I don't want to get mixed up in it, I says. Ma has come out for Science and Health, and Pa is sticking to the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Methodist Church, besides being a druggist, and I don't figure I want to come right out in the open for either argument against the other one just yet.

I mean Science like chemmikles and digging in the ground, says Squint. Listen. You never heard of Gold being discovered in this part of Ill., did you. No. Why? Because nobody ever thought to look.

Shucks, says Mull.

Shucks all you want to, says Squint. That's always been the way with dum bells. Nobody ever thought to discover America till Columbus tried, did they? Nobody ever thought Jack Dempsey could be licked till this fellow Tooney comes along and says he will take a chance, there's good money in it even if he loses. And the dum bells all hooted at Thos. Eddison when he said he was going to invent ellectricity, but now look at ellectricity, they are even trying to make new religions out of it, dad says. And of course I expect you dum bells to hoot and razz me the same way when I tell you there's gold a good eal nearer than you got any idea of.

You know what quarts is continued Squint going on with how smart he was and I could tell he had been reading the childs wonder book again. Not quarts of milk like you bone heads mean, but quarts like Gold comes in. Whairever there is a certain kind of clay there has got to be that kind of quarts and whereever there is a certain kind of quarts there has got to be gold. It is a good thing one of this Gang keeps their eyes open or I do not know what would happen to this Gang cave and all.

Well, that kind of clay with that kind of quarts in it with nuggits of gold stuck into it like raisens in a cooky is made and hid out by Gee-ology.

And what is made by Gee-ology and hid by Gee-ollogy it takes Gee-ologey to find again and that is where Science comes in. Science tells you where Ge-olligy has hid things.

Coming up to the Cave a few days ago I saw some of that Clay, but I didn't say anything to you Kids because I did not want you blatting your mouths off all over town till I was sure. The Enimy would of got it out of you. I just laid low and used my science and looked for signs of that quartz and when we were in swimming a while ago I saw some of it. But I didn't say anything to you two dum bells. I knew you wouldn't believe me. I would have to do all the deep thinking and put the science and hard work into it and when I found it you would holler shares on me. But there is probilly more than a Million dollars worth of that Gold right in under here where we are laying this minute.

I started to put my clothes on for it come to me all of a sudden if I was going to be that rich in a few minutes I would want to start in with my clothes on and my hair slicked up a little.

Where is all that clay and quarts, says Mull.

Squint goes into the Cave and gets a peace of parchmint and we drawed blood from our arms and signed a solemn Oath with a skull and cross bones we would share and share alike and then Squint says to me, Freckles, if you was to reach your hand over the bank right where you are laying now you would likely find a chunk of that quarts sticking out of the clay.

I was laying on the grass on the edge of the swimming hole under a big oak tree and I started to reach my hand but Squint yells, Stop!

Don't touch that Gold, says Squint, don't touch it yet! I've just thought of something.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I hadn't believed so much in it, but when he made us sign in blood, and acted that excited way, I begun to believe in that Gold too, and so did Mull, and I figured it was as much my Gold as his, so I says why Stop?

This has got to be done Leegal right from the start, says Squint, or there would be trouble later. This clame has got to be Staked off.

My idea says Mull would be to get the gold first, if we stake it off first somebody might see the stakes, we better get the gold first and Stake it Off afterwards.

I am asshamed of you Mull, says Squint. Don't you want this done honest?

I had not thought of that and I was mighty glad Squint's conshince was on the job. And then I says to Squint it seems to me even if we do Stake off a claim all this Gold oughto belong by rights to whatever Farmer owns this land.

Don't be a dum bell, says Squint, ain't you ever heard of treasure trove?

What does it mean, says Mull.

It is one of these unwritten laws you read about that is higher than all other laws, says Squint, and it means that findings is keepings.

Even if it is Leegal I said, it don't sound right to me not to give any of it to the farmer that owns this land.

That is because you dum bells don't know anything about riptarian rights, says Squint, showing off again. Ritparian rights is when treasure trove lays along a crick or river bank, maybe some of it has washed down stream from above, and all the way up and down the stream it is like that, and for all we know a lot of the Gold that leegally belongs to us has been washed down stream. It is like fish, these bullheads don't belong to this farmer just because they were caught on his land, they are leegaly entitled to swim up and down stream, and they belong to whoever is wherever they are caught, and it is the same way with this Gold.

That made me feel a good eal easier, and so we staked off our claim, and we staked around the Cave too, for we might as well own that ourselves, we figured, and we staked a place that took in a part of the crick itself.

And after we had done our Staking off we come home and throwed our Voices all the way home as if they were comeing from ghosts of horse thieves and pirates who were guarding all our Gold from the Enimy, and I am so excited about all our Gold I do not expect to sleep very much tonight.

July twentieth—We went and got our Good Deeds for the rest of vacation time all washed up today. A Boy Scout is supposed to do one a day. So almost any kind or helpful thing you did for a widow or Orphan would count as a splendid good deed and we were practissing joo jitsu in Mull's barn and Mull says, Lookit at all these sticks of firewood those dum bells delivvered into the barn instead of the woodshed near the house where dad wanted it. Somebody has got to carry it to the woodshed. If we each took a stick to the woodshed that would be a good deed, for my dad is an orphan. So we figured up 48 more days of vacation from school, and we each took 48 sticks to the woodshed on account of Mull's dad being an Orphan, and in a little while we had the whole remainder of our Vacation free. And then we went up to the crick to where we had staked out our Gold.

Some of the stakes was gone. It was only too plain that the Enimy had been tampering with it, trying to Jump our

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

claim. There was a clew by one of the stakes, a horse's hoof print, and we armed ourselves to the teeth and followed the hoof prints.

The trail ended at a horse who was eating grass.

We laid in the bushes and shaddowed him while he et grass, for more than likely the Enimy that had used him to scout over our clame would be up to the same desperit tricks again ere long, and we would ketch him red-handed, and we shaddowed this horse all afternoon, but he was a trick horse, the cunning fiends incarnate had trained him well, he made no move to give them away, all the time he looked innocent and et grass, they had trained him so he looked like any other horse would look eating grass, we throwed our Voices all around him, but he pertended he took no notice. These are suttle fiends incarnate we are tracking down, but we are closing in on them. The next move they will probilly turn his shoes wrong end to, and that will be another clew.

July twenty-first—Dear Diary, here is another clew, the horse has got no shoes on, we shadowed him again today.

July twenty-second—A new mystery has come to light, Squint says his Dad is very uneasy and cross, and while we were sitting in the mouth of the cave who should come walking thoughtful along the crick and through the pasture but Mr. Thompson, Squint's Dad, and he passed by the horse and the horse whinnied at him and he gave it the core of an apple he had been eating. Could it be possible Mr. Thompson is our Enemy?

Squint turned pale, he says, no matter where these clews lead, we must follow them, if my Dad is Guilty, he must pay the penalty, Men, let us shadow him, if need be to the death! So we armed ourselves to the teeth and shadowed Mr. Thompson all the way home, he went through the woods back to town, and we let him go a respectful distance ahead of us and throwed our voices from tree to tree, and imitated birds and wild cats so he would never dream he was stalked by Avengers. For it was only too aperent he was the missreant had plotted to Jump our Clame.

So we disguised ourselves as Boy Scouts when we got to town and hid under the Thompsons verandeh and heard Mr. and Mrs. Thompson talking and she says no wonder you are busted, all the time gambling on the Chicago Board of Trade, and Dan can't finish college and it is a shame, which Dan is Squint's older brother, and studying to be a Sivvle Engineer.

Well I had a tip the market was going up says Mr. Thompson.

I have begged you a hundred times she says to let speculashion alone and now we are ruined and your children will have no education. That sounded pretty soft for Squint like maybe Squint could quit school and probilly become a Detective right away and me and Mull was pretty jealous of him.

Well, says Squints Dad to his Mother, the greater part was not lost in speculashon, there was some notes I indorsed for some people.

Yes, she says, you can indorse notes for good for nothings but you care little for your wife and children going to the poor house. Such a fool as you are is as bad as being a criminal, Oh why did I ever marry you?

Don't you ride me too hard, he said, or I will tell you who I indorsed those notes for, they were indorsed for some prominent members of your own family.

And after we shadowed them for quite a while and listened to them we

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crawled away without them seeing us and went to Mull's barn. Squint says, now he understands the Motive for the Crime. This man Thompson is Bankrupp, he says, and that is why he is trying to Jump our Clame.

But soon, he says, we will snap the Bracelets on him. No matter if he is his own Dad, his duty is to bring him to Justice.

Mull and me felt pretty sorry for Squint, but pritty soon we saw Squint was getting proud his Dad had turned out a Criminle.

Besides which, he says, he has thought for a long time these Thompsons is not really his own people, but only pertended to be. He was taken by them to raise, he says, and he can remember his own people when he was quite little, they were a dark complected people, and he can remember as a baby living in tents and wagons, and his real people was Gipsies, he can remember the gold rings in their ears and their camp fires, and the Thompsons bought him off the Gipsies when very young, and once when he asked his Mother who his real family was she boxed his ears, and that made him certain they were Consealing the Truth. First he will bring these Thompsons to justice and then he will find his Own People again, and travel with them and become the Gipsie Detective.

He showed us what he said was a Gipsy Birthmark on his arm and him and Mull had a fight, because Mull said it was nothing but a vaxanation scar.

We disguised ourself as Boys of School Age and went home to our suppers, and after supper we armed ourselves to the teeth again. Met at Mull's barn and put on our false mustaches and our detective stars under our coats and took our black jacks and crawled on our stummicks from the barn through the garden and around to the front lawn and laid behind some lilac bushes on our stummicks and shadowed Mull's sister Ella.

Which she was sitting in the hammick in the dark and Squint's brother Dan was there, and he says, Well, if I do haff to quit college for a year or so and work, I can go back and work my way through collige, lots of the fellows do, it only means waiting a year or two more than we counted on, Dear.

Oh, Dan, she says, I will wait, I do love you, and then she cried, and he said, I will get a job at once and we can be married next Spring. No she says, you got to keep on and graduate for an engineer, and there was a lot more Mushy Talk about, Oh, I do love you, I will wait forever, and we felt pretty sick at our stummicks listening to all this Mush Talk.

We felt pritty sorry for these Young Folks, too, they took it so seerious, but it was another Evvidence of the Crimes of this man Thompson who had Stole Squint from his rightful Parents and was now trying to Jump our Clame, it looked Black for Thompson, the meshes was closing in on him, and now on account of his Crimes Dan could not be an Engineer and these Young Folks would be torn asunder, maybe.

Just the same it was pretty Mushy to listen to, so we throwed our Voices to make it sound like severil cats and dogs was fighting amungst the lielac bushes and Dan says, Hey you little devils, get out of that! So we pertended we were Street Arrabs and we yelled at him:

Dan's mad and I am glad and I know what'll pleese him! a bottle of wine to make him shine, a bottle of ink to make him stink and Ellynore to Squeeze him.

July twenty-third—We went up to the Cave early to see if our Gold was still there, and everything was O.K., except

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a couple more Stakes of our Clame was knocked over, but no evvidences that Gold was Dug up yet. That will be theyre next move. Digging up the Gold.

So we went to work at once fixing the Gun over to be a Musheen Gun, all we need is some tools and we could turn it into a Dandy Masheen Gun, and some new Parts to fit in, we brought up quite a bit of an old clock out of our house, it was a granfathers clock, we took the works, and also a meat grinding masheen from Squint's kitchen when no one of the Enimy was On Guard, and some bolts and nuts, and quite a lot of works that used to be a phonograf and one of these little ellectric sowing mashiens. Well now we got plenty of parts to turn it into anything, what we need is Tools.

So we bilt a forge to make Tools, out of stones, like you build an ovvin out doors to cook in. We got to have Tools. And we got to have a Masheen Gun, we will set it in the Mouth of the Cave behind the vines and bushes, it will point out over our Stakes and then we would like to see any Miscreant jump our clame.

It will shoot twenty thosand bullits per minnit, let the Enimy walk into that hale storm of Deth if he has the Nerve, that Gold is ours.

We bilt our forge onto a black rock that sticks out of the ground near our Cave, and when we bilt a fire in our forge a funny thing happened, we went in swimming before we started to make the tools, and now and then we would throw more wood into the forge, and we was swimming two or three hours off and on, and then we decided we would have to draw up Plans and Designs for the Tools and would put it off a few days, and then we looked at that black rock, and that black rock was caught afire itself, smoldering into the ground, and Squint says, Look at that! Geeollagey did that! Chemmickles and Geeologgy can do anything! So we put some new stakes around our Gold, and put on our Clothes and fought out a Bees Nest and then played we was Beevers in the crick to take the stings out and armed ourselves to the Teeth and Shadowed each other all the way home through the woods.

July twenty-fifth—Rum-running and hi-jacking all day today, so as to look out for Clews. Squint says we got to get in with the Rackiters and other Criminels and win their Connfidence so as to get Clews on all of them. The Plots are getting thicker in the Thompson family, and Squint is making up a skeme to get Mr. Thompson's finger prints.

July twenty-sixth—Over to the big pasture by Mull's house and was Knites of King Arthur's Round Tabel, we had a Turnyment. We had wash boiler lids for sheelds and tin buckets for helmits an clothes poles for lances, but theyre was only two horses in the pasture and I had to ride a cow. Mull swiped me in the stummick with a clothes pole and I fell off the cow, and throwed up. It was all red, and Squint and Mull thought I was dying of a hemiraje. But I remembered I had been eating strawberries, and Mull give me some medicine he found in the barn in a bottle, which Dolly, theyre old horse, had left after she had the collic last Spring, and it cured me, and we took the dogs and went up to the Cave.

Melted talow and greesed ourselves all over with talow and fish worms so no matter how long we staid in the water we would not take a Cramp, it is an old Injun trick, sometimes a detective will have to stay under water with just his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nose and ear out for hours and hours lisening to Conspirracies; we shall keep greesed with tallow and fish worms the rest of this vacation, no one knows whether the next Clew will come from Land or Water, but the dogs did not like the smell of it, they sniffed us and run off through the woods pertending they seen a rabit.

And purty soon who should come walking up the crick bank from towards town but two men, they walked like Enimies, they was Plotting in low tones of Voice. We crawled into the Cave and took our clothes with us, and they set down in front of the Cave and talked.

One of them was the Criminel Thompson.

The other one was my own Dad.

We covered them from Behind the bushes with the Masheen Gun.

A mistery was afoot, and maybe Foul Play of some sort. My Dad had been loored there by the same Thompson who had stolen Squint from the Gipsies and who was plotting to Jump our Clame.

The criminle Thompson says to my Dad, I've got a good going bizness, but I'm in a Tight Spot right now. If I had 3 or 4 thousand dollars for six months it would see me through this Tough Spot. I could give you a morgage on this 100 akres of land here for Sikurity if you wanted it.

When did you buy this land said My Dad.

About Six Months ago said Thompson, I figured on a quick turn over, I was going to turn it over to the Club for the New Golf Course.

This was the first we knew who owned this land our Gold was on. Squint whispered to Mull and me, he had Stole a march on us. I tell you what I'll do says my Dad, Thompson, I will take this whole hunderd akers off your hands, what do you value it at.

It is worth at least 200$ per akre says Thompson. That would come to 20 thousand $s.

Suppose we say Five thousand $s down, says my Dad and a 6 per cent morgage on the rest of it.

Thompson he hemmed and hawed, and he said, it will be a darned shame if Dan has to quit collidge, at the same time I'd like to hold onto this land.

My Dad he got up and he walked back and forth with his hands in his pockets. Pretty soon he stopped still and looked hard at something.

All right says Mr. Thompson, I'll sell the whole hunderd akers to you, I am in a Tough Spot.

My Dad suddenly begun to laugh. He says, No, Thompson, you wont sell it to me! I won't take advantage of you that way. You are a rich man and don't know it. Look here!

Mr. Thompson and him looked where our forge had been bilt.

I'll be damned says Thompson!

The only thing we could think of was they must of seen some of our quarts with gold in it, and Squint and Mull and me jumped out of the bushes and we was yelling, You can't Jump our Clame! See those stakes! This is our Gold here!

They looked quite surprized to see us, we was greased up as I said before, Dear Diary, and My dad says, I thought I smelled something strange. What is this game now?

You are Jumping our Clame, Squint says, this is our Gold Mine.

Gold Mine he says, you mean Coal Mine. And he pointed to that black rock we'd bilt our fire on. Good soft coal, he says.

Coal mine was what I meant to say,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Watson, says Squint to my Dad, I made a slip of the tung, I knew it was coal all the time. Mull and me looked at each other, but we didn't say anything, there is no use trying to ketch up with Squint when he starts to saying what he has said.

It seems to me these young pirates have saved the day for you, says my Dad to Mr. Thompson, Great Scott, what is that? He pointed to our Masheen Gun which was peeking out of the Bushes. Mr. Thompson and my Dad exxamined it carefully, and they says, Great Scott! if it is ever shot off it is dangerous.

Dear Diary, we traded our Gun and our Clame for 3 new air rifles which will shoot 1 thousand times without reloading, and it turns out Mr. Thompson was not really a Villian after all, Squint says he just got in with a Bad Bunch, and Dan who is going back to college in the Fall is paying us 25 cents a week a piece not to do too much shadowwing and Mull's sister Ella has been making us so much choklat fudge that honest the Cave is just praktikly paved with it.

July twenty-eight—Paynted ourselves all over with jooce from young Wallnuts, it will not come off, theyre was trouble at home for all of us, we are now all over the coller of Injuns. If they don't like us that culler after all we done for them they doant need to have us around, we are tired of A-Dults anyhow, the more you do for them the more they ackt ungracefull, we swore the Oath today we would live in the Cave entirely hearafter, there is enough Varmints in these Wilds to suport life for old veterin hunters and trapers, we are bilding an aerioplane, if they doant want us this culler they can say goodby forever, we will scoot over the houses in our airioplane and yell goodby down the chimleys, goodby forever, theyre are plenty of plaices they will like us this collor, old snooty A-Dults, goodby forever!

Homeward Voyage

By Lawrence Lee

Slowly the great ship gathers way,
The bells of Cherbourg ring across the sea;
Behind us fades the little town in gray
And figures moving on the stony quay.

Gulls cry, and evening closes in;
The last faint land sound bids us safely home.
To-morrow it will seem no world has been
But the wide sky, the windy sea, and foam.

Paris next week again will seem
A city built of beauty, wine, and joy;
Vienna still like music in a dream;
And Budapest again as lost as Troy.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One Year in the Ministry

A young pastor looks realistically at his calling and challenges statements made by optimists concerning the hunger of youth for religion. His article is a record of spiritual travail and a confession of faith. He questions whether Protestant Christianity is a religion or a reform organization.

A MAN who has spent but a year in the ministry should probably keep his mouth shut. At least, he should not lift his voice to swell that raucous chorus of ridicule and denunciation raised by H. L. Mencken and his disciples, who seem determined to harry all prophets out of the land, particularly those of the Methodist and Baptist variety. He should not be, or cannot possibly be, a man of any real convictions. He should permit time and the ministry to have their way with him a while longer. And, indeed, I trust that continuance in my profession may have an ameliorative effect upon the views and perhaps the convictions that a year has produced.

But nevertheless I am interested in what this little space of preaching has done to my mind and spirit. Others may not be interested. But I have a longing to express myself, to pour out my fears and doubts upon the printed page. And I have both in abundance. In fact, I sometimes think that the past months have caused me to place a question-mark after everything, including life itself, although such gloomy sieges are probably confined to my more pessimistic moments. But at least I can say this: in these past months I have placed a tremendous question-mark after the ministry, the church, and Christianity. I have gained none of that buoyant optimism with which youth is said to be endowed. I am in serious doubt about the ministry's being the "high calling." I am wondering if the church is indeed founded upon a rock against which the gates of hell itself shall not prevail. Is there a saving power in Christianity? And, if so, will the world be saved? Or, better, does it want to be saved? Such questions are forever bothering me. And I find it impossible to lightly dismiss them, suddenly acquire that attractive attribute, implicit faith, and plunge into the business of preaching and ministering with a blind determination.

Nor do I ride alone. At my class reunion this year I found others who were questioning and doubting and sighing and wondering if the career of an insurance agent was not to be preferred to that of the ministry. We were all rather down in the mouth about the whole business. Far into the night we discussed the prevailing woful conditions and all possible panaceas. More ritual and symbolism was suggested by one as the need of the evangelical churches. In short, he believes that our church, the Presbyterian, doesn't have a religion; and so he now leans heavily in the direction of the Episcopal fold. Still another believes that the salt of Christianity has become insipid through over-organization. He was opposed by one who believes that more businesslike principles should be injected into the modern church. The most conservative member of the group thought the church dying because of its failure to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stress individual salvation, and would probably favor a modern version of the mourner's bench. And, of course, there are the advocates of the social gospel and more of it; these we always have with us. The most optimistic of us had just about decided to professionalize the ministry; he would preach a sermon, read the Scriptures, and offer up a prayer as a mason might put a brick in place and slap on the mortar or as a heartless loan-shark might figure interest. But, by and large, I found among those who had been a year in the ministry anything but optimism. And we left each other still tragically confused and still wholly uncommitted to the "high calling." The indomitable spirit of youth crying with Saint Paul "He must reign!" was simply not present. Indeed, all of us, as I look back at those hours, were engaged in hanging crape on the church door.

Perhaps we were, oddly enough, fault-finders who had gravitated to their kind. But I think not. A year in the ministry has simply aroused more fears than hopes. Nor do I believe them idle fears that will vanish away with marriage or our first advance in salary. Something is seriously wrong. Either we have been victimized by our age and the venom of materialism has crept into our system, to poison us spiritually, or the church and Christianity do not call to us as they should. There is no great pull toward the ministry, none of the feeling of "woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."

I feel it too keenly. I am not satisfied. To be sure, I am not altogether unhappy—the year has passed rather swiftly—but neither am I hopeful. To say that my attitude approaches that of hopelessness is putting it none too strongly. Occasionally, exalted by the preaching of a good sermon or the perfecting of a new organization, my spirits soar, and I am ready to be reviled and persecuted for the Gospel's sake. But the blue devils always return, and the last state of my soul is worse than the first. The urge which drives a man through depression and gloom is absent. And I have a feeling that it shouldn't be so, but that youth, come what may, should believe in the conquering power of Christianity. Sometimes I think a conversion such as Paul experienced or the rebirth of which Jesus spoke is necessary. At other times I am painfully conscious of a lack of consecration. If I could only pray more and could really know what is meant by the power of prayer! If I were not so unbelieving! If I were only not so worldly! I have no faith! I entertain too many doubts!

I have passed through a year of self-denunciation such as this, trying to take the blame. But now I begin to wonder if I am wholly at fault. What of the other young ministers of whom I spoke? Why hasn't the beauty and wonder of Christianity aroused in us that enthusiasm which a good business prospect arouses in a young business man? I doubt if any one of us—if eighty per cent of the ministers to-day—would be willing to die for the Gospel's sake, much less give up a modern manse for a shanty on the plains or a hovel in some foreign-mission field. Where is this magnetic power in Christianity about which the preachers roar?

A brother of mine entered the ministry ten years before I did. We accused him of pessimism. We called him a chronic grumbler. My father, also a minister, spoke of his own youth and the power which drove him forward. But my brother insisted that Christianity and the church were not the same

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

yesterday, to-day, and forever in their appeal to people—particularly to-day. Where people once flocked to the church, they now avoided it. He stoutly maintained that something was radically wrong, although he was confused as to the exact trouble. And because his diagnosis was uncertain, we assumed that the fault lay entirely with him and stamped him as one with an inherent gloomy outlook. In my innocence I was among those who condemned him.

But I have now been a year in the ministry. I may go on until I become the proverbial down-at-the-heels, dispirited, sad-eyed parson. Or I may look back some day to laugh at the idle fears of youth. As to my outlook twenty years from now, I hesitate to prophesy. I only know that one year has done certain things to me.

II

There is youth. Young myself—I am not yet twenty-five—the attitude of youth disturbs and depresses me, and has come nearer to destroying my faith than has any other factor. When I assumed my pastorate, the congregation expected me to do great things with the young people. I haven't. Perhaps I have shirked my duty, although I suffer from no acute compunction of conscience on that score. I experience only a certain hopelessness as youth passes the church by.

One Sunday evening of this year, I stood upon a street corner pondering this question of youth and Christianity. I knew that I should go to my young people's meeting in a few moments to wait patiently while the half-dozen regular attendants straggled in. While I stood there, several high-school students came by, spoke to me, jumped into a near-by car, and were off to a neighboring town to a picture-show. Here, I thought, is representative youth, football and basket-ball stars, the president of the senior class, the obvious leaders, to-morrow's mainstay, and the citizens of the future, if the commencement orators are to be believed, and yet utterly ignoring Christianity.

Like Gaar Williams, I felt that something ought to be done about this. But what to do? I had repeatedly invited the young people to church. I had arranged services especially for them. No doubt I could have enticed them into the sheepfold with a ham sandwich and a song-and-dance act. (Indeed, I sometimes think that evangelical Christianity is inextricably interwoven with ham sandwiches and potato salad.) But the thought repulses me, for I dread the day when the Protestant church will be known as a place to get a good chicken dinner instead of a place in which to worship. And so far as entertainment is concerned, I hesitate to compete with the movie magnates and their galaxy of stars.

Before the last Easter service, I passed through another experience that unnerved me spiritually. I held a class for young people who were thinking of entering the church. I did not make consent to join the church a prerequisite for entering the class. There was to be nothing compulsory about this. I would allow youth its freedom. Youth would decide for itself. This, I thought, would be an excellent idea. The majority would, of course, decide in favor of the church. Consequently, I threw my best into those classes. I had outlines printed for each pupil. I tried to be fair. If any questions were asked—and I think there were two asked!—I tried to give a reasonable answer. I tried to make religion live and glow and pulsate and all

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that, and so prove its indispensability to modern life. But when the day came for decisions, a meagre six, none of whom were in their teens, decided to enter the church. The high-school students were in no doubt as to their course: they "guessed" they didn't care to join. And they "guessed" it with such utter indifference that I was completely nonplussed and fought off the blue devil of despondency for a week afterward.

Wherein had I failed? I had refused to herd these young people into the church, or to intimidate them with the suggestion that their failure to join would bring down on their heads the wrath of an angry God. I was never once tempted to commit the heinous crime of ramming creeds and dogmas down their throats. But I tried to speak as simply as possible of Christ and His appeal to youth, of the church and the opportunity for service it afforded, of youth's problems and how the church helped to solve them. But these young people were not enthused. Indifferent, rather.

My most recent and most bitter experience was to question a member of the younger generation on her faith. She had been a confessed Christian since her fourteenth year, attended church regularly, and taught a Sunday-school class. I asked her to be frank, and she was. She dismissed hell from all consideration and was not sure about heaven or her chances of getting there. She supposed that there must be an immortality, but she let slip the idea that neither heaven nor hell would make any difference, as she wouldn't know anything anyway. I then suggested that she didn't believe in immortality—at least the Christian conception of it. Perhaps she didn't—she was not sure. Did she believe in God? Yes, but she neither feared Him nor loved Him. Did her acceptance of Christianity mean anything to her in that it affected her way of living? She maintained very stoutly that it meant nothing, that she didn't know what it meant, that she had repented of her sins and been baptized because she liked the minister who asked her to undergo this rite. And her most stirring memory of the day she accepted Christ was that the baptismal water had a most irritating way of trickling down the bridge of her nose. She prayed sometimes, but seldom read her Bible.

I was not particularly shocked by her answers. I know a dozen more young people who would answer similarly if they were as frank. But what did disturb me and shock me was her vast indifference as to whether or not they were answered at all.

And yet Doctor Fosdick and other great leaders are eternally declaring that youth is hungry for religion. Below the levity and nonchalance of youth are the depths, the hidden springs of noble desires and holy longings, the hunger of the heart for God. So say those who ought to know. It is a beautiful thought. And it did me no end of good when I first read these glowing tributes to the serious side of youth. But experience has made me wonder if these tributes are not an example of what a recent writer has called "sentimental optimism" or, at best, a defense mechanism raised by those who have also met with discouragement. We should all like to believe these things true of youth. We are eager to believe the best, but why be gullible? I may not believe, as does Albert Payson Terhune, that the young people are hell-bent. But they are at least not church-bent! If the youth are perishing for spiritual manna, why do they drive fifty miles to a picture-show

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when they could walk a block and attend a young people's society or a church service? There they might worship God and consider their soul's welfare. Perhaps there is a stock answer for that question, all full of hope for the pessimists. But I'm persuaded that the real answer is that youth would rather revel in the cute antics of the inimitable Clara Bow or gaze upon the masculine pulchritude of a Richard Dix than attend a church service where Saint Peter himself was scheduled to preach.

Youth is hungering and thirsting after religion. And youth wants the church. If the church will install bowling-alleys and pool-tables and promote prize-fights, no doubt youth will hunger for such things. But a year in the ministry has set me to wondering if deep down in the heart of youth there really is a desire to follow the young man Jesus.

III

This leads me to the question of salvation. I was not in the church two months before I began to wonder what salvation the church had to offer. I could not shout a warning of the Great Abyss toward which all the unsaved were plunging. Fortunately—or we suppose fortunately—the "lake of fire" is something to arouse a chuckle, an example of what our gullible forebears believed in the Roaring Forties and the Gay Nineties. I could plainly offer no salvation from hell, at least not a good old-fashioned hell such as caused Jonathan Edwards's congregation to clutch their pews for fear of sliding into perdition. Hell simply doesn't yawn for the wise modern.

What then? It's all very simple. My salvation must be affirmative. Don't frighten people into religion, but love them into it. As my seminary professor used to tell us, "woo them." Tell the people what the church will do for them. It will put them in the Christian harness. They can do things for their fellow man and for God that they could not do otherwise. "Christ doesn't want to rob us of our freedom, but He wants to make us more free." "Abundant life"—that seems to be the key-word. Gifts, talents, time can be consecrated. One can find happiness in living outwardly and not for self. Now here is a lovely plan of salvation, and it ought to appeal to our highest motives. No fears or inhibitions here. God is love. That must be iterated and reiterated. And by returning that love and joining the fellowship of all others who love Him, man will be splendidly equipped for service, his chief end, according to the shorter catechism of to-day. There needs to be no sudden catastrophic change such as overtook Paul on the Damascan way. That is entirely passé. But there is to be just a steady spiritual growth. A man's mind will be set in the right direction.

But the appeal to higher motives, to man's basic love for the best, has not met with startling success in my parish. Nor am I convinced that it is succeeding anywhere very well, which may account for the alarming decrease in church attendance and membership. In spite of the optimists, I am inclined to doubt man's interest in God or how to serve Him. If he has any ideals, he gives them expression through the Kiwanians, the Rotarians, the Lions, and in his lodges. When my father, who is one of the so-called old-fashioned preachers, asked a dying man to accept Christ, he replied: "Well, Reverend, I always told my son that so long as he was a good Mason and a good Republi-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can, he'd get along." And I know not one man but a dozen who, if they were honest, would acclaim that with a loud Amen. The church undoubtedly has something to offer, if nothing more than an opportunity to worship. But how can it offer a salvation to men who see neither the value nor the need for it?

It is useless to attempt the old-time evangelistic methods, with their heavy emphasis on sin, hell, and the devil. And I personally don't care to have the majority of evangelists enter my church, with their sensational onslaughts against the bootleggers, cards, and dancing. Such preaching gives me a pain in the neck. But I should like to see people following Christ because He offers them a full life and salvation from the sin of self. But either such a salvation makes no appeal or there is no sense of sin. Ninety per cent of the men with whom I have talked about uniting with the church have said "no" quite calmly. The women, to be sure, are a bit more interested. But they are far from eager, and do not act at all as if the state of being known as "love in Christ" were the greatest thing in the world. As an anonymous author, writing in a recent issue of *Harper's Magazine* on the future of America, asks: "What is the use of recommending the satisfactions of spiritual activity to people who are already quite satisfied amid the inconceivable multiplicity of mechanical accessories and organized promotions of spiritual inactivity?" In truth, what is the use!

To be sure, people can be herded into the church; children can be induced to, or intimidated into, entering; we can drum up church attendance with sensational preaching, by pushing pamphlets, and by promoting Go-To-Church-Sunday Weeks. But why are all these methods necessary? Why must I spend all my time running a mimeograph machine, working up church suppers, and throwing party after party in the church parlors? If people are hungry for religion, as the good doctors assure me, why do I have to ballyhoo the crowd and sugar-coat the pill of salvation with an uproarious evening in the church basement? I object to having people join the church in gratitude for letting them use the bowling-alleys. I refuse to run down a convert with follow-up letters. I am still of the opinion that the church was meant for something more than a club or lodge, although I know many a temple which compares favorably with the local Elks Club both from a point of view of architecture and the activities carried on within it.

And yet if I can't offer these things, I have nothing wherewith to charm the wayward man. The winsomeness of Christ—for all the optimists may say—does not appear to win in nine cases out of ten. The modern Babbitt is, at least, indifferent to Him. He works out his salvation Sunday morning by stepping on the gas to get as far away from church as possible, in casting flies at hungry trout, or in pursuing golf-balls up hill and down dale. This is to be preferred to a stuffy church, with a black-gowned choir singing dirges, and a sad-eyed parson prating in oily phrases about love and peace and good-will.

IV

And the conviction grows with me every day that the evangelical churches have more of a moral code than they have a religion. We are, by and large, moralists. That is our religion. Most of us haven't the slightest conception of what worship means. Religion, as de-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fined by the small boy, means "not doing anything you want to do." This is the conception of religion as taught from the primary to the adult department in the Sunday-schools, and the attitude may be said to have derived its real growth in this institution, although the Protestant pulpit is by no means guiltless in this respect. In my Sunday-school rooms was a gigantic pledge-card signed by many a scholar and swearing them all to abstinence from the Demon Rum and the pernicious cigarette. Placards and pledge-cards of this sort are typical of our church. And I feel that Protestantism has made its greatest mistake by laying an emphasis on reform.

We evangelicals are eternally saving the world by putting a stop to something, to everything from short skirts to war. When, in answer to her question, I told a lady in my church that I saw no harm in a minister's smoking, she was horrified. Why? What possible harm could there be in a man's having an after-breakfast cigarette or pipe, as I have been told was the practice of many a great preacher? As long as a man smokes temperately, I can by no stretch of the imagination see any more harm in the habit than that of coffee-drinking. And yet to most of our Protestant women it is one of the unpardonable sins. If, in the instance above, I had confessed to smoking occasionally, the good woman would no doubt have quit the church and hauled me before the Presbytery on a charge of arch-heresy. For such things constitute her religion. Don't do this and don't do the other thing, and your reservation in paradise is assured. I am not wholly committed either to the wisdom or to the Christianity of national prohibition. But if I were to wax vocal in my doubts as to value of that priceless pearl of the reformers, the prayers of thirty million Protestants would invoke the vengeance of Heaven upon me. I would immediately be accused of undermining the foundations of Protestantism. And the accusation would be correct. For the Protestant church rests upon the wabbly foundation of the success it has achieved in reforming the world morally. It rests upon Sinai and not upon the Mount made sacred by the great sermon of Jesus.

This conception of the Christian religion has kept many a worthy man out of the church, many a man whom Christ would have welcomed. Our crack golfer refused to join the church because he liked to play golf on Sunday, and he didn't consider that very good Christianity. Who told him it wasn't? As a matter of fact, outside of attending Sunday-morning worship, he could probably spend his Sundays in no more profitable way. He is shut in all week, and golf is a needed rest and change from the routine of office work. Isn't it William Lyons Phelps who preaches Sunday morning and plays eighteen holes Sunday afternoon? And what preacher wouldn't like to play a few holes of golf after the nervous exhaustion of a Sunday-morning service? But if I should attempt it! I shudder to think of the consequences. The only blasphemy comparable to it would be to take a little wine for the stomach's sake.

The town in which I preach has just voted down Sunday movies. When the question was presented to the public, the two other evangelical ministers were immediately aroused to action. At last, here was something that was irreligious, and the cry immediately went up for all good Christians to arm themselves against this sacrilege. The Methodist minister, in an attack from his own

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pulpit, brought forth shouting for the first time in a decade. Later, a union meeting was held, from which I withheld my support. For the first time in many a day the churches began to wake up—all but mine, perhaps, for I went no further than to make a short statement from the pulpit in regard to my position, and I hesitated to go even that far. But in spite of my rather neutral position, I realized that if I wanted to make religion interesting and inject some of that modern elixir known as "pep" and "snap" into it, I should have launched a vicious attack against the hellish designs of those who advocated letting Tom Mix do his stuff on Sunday evening.

But I refrained. For I am heartily sick of a religion based almost entirely upon an attempt to legislate man into the kingdom of heaven. To be sure, here is a religion that people can understand. It's an attack that has an objective in the local movie palace; men know what the parson's talking about; he knows what he's talking about; he gets all excited about it; the congregation responds; and, consequently, a good time is had by all. No doubt that is why sermons on the fate of the lost soul were once hailed with hallelujahs. Every man in the church knew the very derelict who was even then suspended over the bowels of Gehenna. Here was something concrete. Some men were frying, others were twanging a harp, and the whole plan of salvation was blocked out with a square and compass.

But is all this Christianity? The deep spirituality of Jesus, I take it, is quite another matter. You can't block that off or pare it down mathematically. It's an overflowing spirit that can be neither defined nor confined. There is hardly a "don't" in Christianity as taught by its founder. But the religion of the evangelicals is more negative than it is anything else. Mencken and his disciples have some cause to rave. For if there was anything that Christ taught, it was the utter folly of attempting to ram Christianity down a man's throat, or legislate it down or club it down. But the Protestant church has become identical with just that spirit. Men stay out of the church because they're afraid they'll have to give up something—smoking, a morning nip or nightcap, or Sunday golf. They are under the impression that the whole business of Christ was forbidding things. As a matter of fact, "where the spirit of God is there is liberty." And the duty of the church is not to prohibit, but to give man new incentives, new motives, and new loyalties. Christ did not free by taking away but by endowing men with what has been called "the expulsive power of a new affection." And yet the church has spent the greater share of its time driving out the Demon Rum or the Demon Nicotine, getting the house "empty, swept, and garnished," only to let the old inhabitant return with "seven other spirits more wicked than himself." True morality, like anything else, is heart-born. You can't force me to love my neighbors. Neither can you make me morally clean if in my heart I want to be otherwise. Take Bourbon away from me and I'll resort to white mule. Deprive me of tobacco and I'll smoke corn-silks. Granting that some reform is certainly necessary, my contention is that it is not the chief business of the church. The church was not founded to set up anti-societies, but to implant in man's heart a love for Christ and therefore a love for right. A hopeless ideal? Perhaps. But "blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness,"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and accursed are they who are made righteous by the strait-jacket of law, custom, or tradition.

And yet a year in the church has taught me that the anti-this and the anti-thats are in almost full control. They swing the big stick. Reform is essentially the religion of evangelical Protestantism. Our salvation depends upon the enactment of more Eighteenth Amendments, and the Kingdom will come when we have outlawed the cigarette and one-piece bathing-suits.

V

A year in the ministry should affect one's attitude toward Christ. He is the norm, the all-important. And, indeed, He is more in a man's thoughts than are all other things or persons. And the optimists seem to think this true of the world in general. They bolster their argument by pointing to the books pouring off the press about Him. And in spite of the wholesale indifference to the church, men, they contend, are still interested in its founder. Everywhere, everybody is attempting either to reinterpret or redefine His principles. Christ obtrudes Himself upon the mind of modernist and fundamentalist, bolshevist and capitalist, scientist and the believer in pre-Copernican astronomy. The wide-spread sale of books about Him bespeaks an unprecedented interest. People who have it in for the church are either openly or quietly admirers and worshippers of Jesus. When you confront a critic of the church with a question about Jesus Himself, he is usually silenced. Even His enemies are rather hard put to it to find fault with Him. Such is the argument of those who believe that Christianity is slowly conquering the mind of moderns.

But I am not so sure. I confess to a feeling of hopelessness even when I behold the Man Christ Jesus. A friend of mine expressed what is too often my attitude when he wrote: "I am heartily sick of preaching to dull, listless people who never take Christ seriously and who never will." There it is. Will we ever take Him seriously? Could we if we wanted to? Has His Sermon on the Mount a real place in life? We grant that it provokes a Livingstone or Judson to endure perils of wilderness and disease. But what about the great majority of laymen and ministers? The ministers of to-day are eternally howling about the tremendous sacrifice involved in their work. But ninety-nine per cent of them are sleek, well-fed, and well-groomed prophets, with a telltale paunch provoked by three squares a day, life in a modern manse, perambulation in a model A Ford, a month's vacation every year, and membership in the Masonic lodge, Kiwanians, and the local golf club. Personally I am sick of hearing preachers groan about their low salaries. Christ didn't believe in salaries, and didn't want us to give much thought to what we should eat or wear. But one has to consider such things in this day and age, say the clergymen. And so they confess, in this particular at least, the utter impracticability of Christianity. I have had too many parsons tell me about their sacrificial life. But where I've known two who were really sacrificing, I've known ten who were salary-grabbers. And I don't think I exaggerate when I say that I know a score of preachers who are preaching because a book-agent's job is the only alternative.

As for laymen, who are mostly business men, do they have any intention of taking Christ seriously? Do they even

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

give consideration to the Golden Rule in business? Can a person really preach a higher patriotism and make anybody see it? Wouldn't the war fever return to all of us—the old patriotic splurges, the flags, the fanfare, and the parade—if we went to war again? I am often painfully conscious of preaching dream-stuff when I talk of Universal Brotherhood and declare the applicability of the Gospel to modern life. And Christianity, if it is not to roll the stone of Sisyphus, must be more than dream-stuff.

And oddly enough—confusion confronts me as I write—I hold the queer conviction that Christianity *is* more than dream-stuff, the only practicable thing on earth, the panacea for most human ills. As G. B. Shaw says, it has never really been tried, on a social scale at least, so that we cannot make any wild prophecies. But because of early training, or a strain of mysticism, or, as the cynic might say, through sheer superstition, I somehow believe that Jesus of Nazareth has the secret to life—not merely to happiness or success or ease—but to that "full" life which He promised. He speaks authoritatively. Only to-day I read: "Without me ye can do nothing." Either the writer misrepresented Him—which is not likely, for there are so many of these statements—or Jesus knew whereof He spoke. He had found the "good news." I believe that!

But, if it is workable, are He and a few followers the only ones who can make it work or want it to work? Is it possible for this Gospel really to usher in a Kingdom of God? Or will the elect compare in numbers to a Sunday-evening congregation? Of men, cannot the men in whose lives Christianity really plays a part be counted on one's fingers? In other words, a year in the ministry has seriously undermined my faith in man, with his nominal Christianity and his actual indifference to it. We sing lustily: "I would be like Jesus." My observations thus far have convinced me that we could sing with less hypocrisy, and with greater fervor: "I would be like Hank Ford."

VI

I am muckle sick of the optimistic slush with which the pastors are lulling their congregations to sleep by congratulating them upon their Christian piety and assuring them that God loves them. I am also sick of all this talk about the hunger of the human heart for "pure religion and undefiled." The attempt to interest men in the church by feeding them chicken dinners belies this theory. Why can't we say quite frankly that the great majority of moderns don't give a cuss about the church or Him it represents? Why don't we confess that the statistics showing forty million Christians in this country are a monumental joke? The religious longing is ineradicably carved upon the human heart, say the philosophers. Very beautiful, but untrue. I fear it is a desire for "weenie" roasts and bowling-alleys, rather than for religion.

I am beginning to believe more and more that the church should no longer attempt to compete with the amusement parks and the pool halls. The country church isn't financially able. And even the city church can never hope to outdo Hollywood. Doctor W. A. Brown, in his most recent theology, has convinced me that worship is the church's specialty. And I hear Isaiah crying: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Thus, the mod-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ern prophet tells us why the church is here, and his ancient predecessor tells us to come and get it. I am in favor of the church at least approximating this bold and independent attitude. A great many churches might die. But those that lived would be worth something to society. And we would find out conclusively whether or not people really want Christianity. A few ministers might have to sell their Fords and be in doubt as to where they would lay their heads for the night. But we would be delivered from the tyranny of the local Chamber of Commerce and mimeograph machines.

And, personally, I prefer to minister to a few souls who really want to be ministered unto than to a thousand who are induced to attend church by follow-up letters or Drive-Your-Car-to-Church Sundays. I prefer the prayer-meeting half-dozen to the hordes that gather from near-by corn-fields and corner stores to eat chicken noodles and strawberry shortcake.

Trinity

By Struthers Burt

You know and I know what counts.
Is it the spirit? Do you know a bird on the wing?
Can you tell its multiple soaring and bending?
Even the eagle poised has motion unending;
Invisible winds and currents, and the earth drawing it down,
And the sun drawing it up, and the cold small aisles
The stars make in the darkness of the ether miles.
Do you know the spirit? It is given you to keep
A little while, yet half that little while is sleep,
And half that little while is puzzled waking;
And all that little while is loss, and overtaking.
The spirit runs like a runner down a dusty lane
Haunted with what it cannot have . . . peace and rain.

You know and I know what counts.
Is it the body? Dear body such a stranger and a home;
I could weep for you that each day takes its tithe
Of your fine intricate movement, swift and lithe.
The spirit makes its journeying and its flight

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But it comes back to the warm body in the night.
O delicate quick rivers of the veins,
O windows where a something secret looks,
I shall go with you through a thousand towns
And bathe with you in amber, leafy brooks,
And when beyond the wind of gray wet downs
I find the gray, wind-trampled plunging of the sea,
Body will overtake the soul and yet,
Not yet will body and soul encompass me.

A swimmer swims into the dawn,
A horseman gallops into the west,
The sun lays sunlight on a lawn,
Or takes with spears the misty forest crest,
Even so small a music as the cricket's cry
Startles and wakes the thing that is not I.
Startles and wakes the unseen, slumbering bird
That darts to freedom, heard, unheard.
I shall go down to grass, and grass will cover
All that is left of body and lover;
I shall look up; the skies may find
The untroubled essence of the bodiless mind;
But still the grass, the sky, the sea
Will hide the moment that discloses me.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He carefully scanned his features for blemishes.

A Man of the World

BY JOHN HELD, JR.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

"FROM Greenland's icy mountains to Florida's coral strand, from the rock-ribbed coast of Maine to the sun-kissed shores of California, I tell you, my friends, we must——"

"Aw, nuts!" said Spug Harkness as he turned off the radio. Spug took great delight in being rude to prominent statesmen. He had once played "I'm Just a Vagabond Lover" on the saxophone while President Hoover was delivering an important message to the taxpayers.

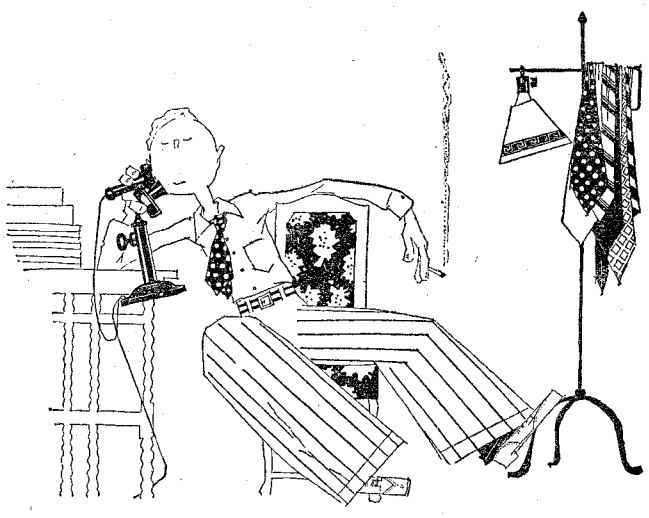
Spug was seventeen years old. He told every one that he was eighteen, as being young embarrassed him. He had tried not shaving his upper lip, but it didn't seem to do much good. He had quite a local reputation for copying my drawings. He sent me a number of them once, drawn in pale-blue writing ink. I never returned them, so he gave up art and took up the tenor-banjo.

He was at this time an occupant of the Kappa House. He shared a room with two other members. They were all about the same age. The room had been originally decorated in rather good taste, but the boys had made several major improvements. The decorator had never intended that the carefully chosen bridge

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lamp should be used as a necktie rack. On it hung perhaps thirty cravats, only two being fit to be worn. The hoarding of old neckwear is a habit that begins early in the masculine programme.

On the gate-legged table in the centre of the room were three pairs of rather soiled tennis shoes that were curled up in front like skis, a few old theatre programmes, a bowl overflowing with dead cigarette ends and a half-used Eskimo pie, a package of Luckies containing, what had been at one time, four cigarettes, but they were now empty tubes of tissue paper. The tobacco had slipped out, long since. But it was a ritual for every one who entered the room to pick up this package, discover that the cigarettes were useless, and then put the package back on the table. There was also a torn sweat shirt, and atop of everything was a saxophone that lacked a reed.



"Mr. Harkness talking."

One of the drawers in a painted chest contained a collection of miscellaneous textbooks, and on the book-shelf was an open bundle of laundry. The wall paper behind the telephone stand was covered with wild hieroglyphics, that when translated were telephone numbers and addresses, but one had to know the key in order to decipher them. The year before, when the room had been papered, all the numbers had been covered over and the boys had lost many friends, as there was no other record of the addresses and phone numbers.

Near the window was what once had been an over-stuffed chair, but which constant occupancy had made more like the throne of a railroad crossing watchman. In its tired upholstery an investigator might find several soiled pocket handkerchiefs, a few small metal tubes that had once contained lip-stick, and a full peck of lint and tobacco crumbs, mixed with burned-out paper matches.

The entire interior of the apartment was a bit untidy, but there was no mistake about it having been lived in, very much lived in.

Spug went out into the hall and did a short but snappy tap dance on the bare floor at the edge of the well-worn carpet. He went from room to room. If the room was occupied he borrowed a cigarette; if the room was unoccupied he searched through the bureau drawers and opened packages of laundry for a shirt. His search was unsuccessful as the clean laundry was not due for another day.

On the way back to his room, he went into the bathroom, and came out with a magazine and a small shaving mirror.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He entered his own room and settled down in the big chair by the window, put the mirror on the window sill, and carefully scanned his features for blemishes in his complexion. He soon completed this survey and then proceeded to draw large black mustachios on the halftone illustrations of Clara Bow and other luminaries of the talking-pictures. He then blocked out a tooth in Buddy Rogers's smile and he was adding the last strokes to a goatee on Laura La Plante when the phone rang.

"Mr. Harkness talking." He always answered the telephone in this manner, for to him it was a dignified procedure.

"Is that you, Spug? This is Peggy. Where are you?"

It was a feminine voice, and the question was absurd because she knew all the time that he was at one end of the connection.

"I've been waiting here at the drug store for hours, and when you didn't come, I just called up to see if you were sick or something."

Spug never started for his dates until they telephoned him from the rendezvous.

"I'm all right. I'll be right down. I was cramming on my Latin and wasn't watching the time. Wait for me, Baby. I'll only be a minute."

He put on his coat. He went over to the small mirror on the window edge and again searched his complexion. He looked at the reflection of his throat for any possible ingrown hairs. He had been shaving for two months, but somehow was never able to find any ingrown hairs. He sighed, pushed his hands deep in his trouser pockets, forcing his belt down over his hips. Then he rubbed his chin, turned on the radio and went out.

Spug found Peggy waiting just inside the drug-store door. He greeted her with that unconcern that is so noticeable in youth.

"How is it, Baby? Been waiting long?"

"No," with unconcern also typical of the feminine, but so false. "I phoned you as soon as I got here."

"Give me a cigarette, will you, sweetheart?"

Peggy best may be described as exactly like fifty other girls of her age in the town; she dressed like them, she talked like them, she thought like them, and her mannerisms were the same as all the rest. She was one of a family of, oh say, five or six children. She was employed in some obscure position. Spug had never bothered to find out just what she did. She took her entire salary home every Tuesday, but always had carfare

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with her. She was a "home girl" as the tabloids say. She had made a deep study of home life, the home life of the popular movie stars. She was consumed with the tender romance of Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Joan Crawford, and she thought Lupe Velez and Gary Cooper were sweet.

"Want a soda?"

"No, I'm not thirsty."

"What do you want to do?"

"Oh, let's take a walk."

"All right, let's go."

The evening was perfect. It was early autumn and the season was at the height of a beautiful performance. The air was just beginning to get crisp, but was still warm enough for comfort, and it was dry. A few leaves had fallen, and some of the more tidy small householders had burned them at the curb, and the thin blue smoke hung suspended in the air. It was the sort of evening when the day tried hard not to submit to darkness, but finally lost its courage and gave up, just as a big circular yellow moon rose slowly in the east. In a word, it was a "big evening."

They walked down the cement sidewalk that bordered the main motor parkway.

"Gee, Spug, I didn't think I was going to be able to come out to-night. Dad was giving me a lot of blah about going out every night. He said decent girls didn't go out every night. You still think I'm decent, don't you, Spug? You do think I'm decent?"

Peggy suddenly became intense with this last question.

"Sure. I think you're decent. What do you think?" replied Spug.

"I'm glad, Spug, because I don't know what I'd do if you didn't think I was decent. Give me a cigarette, will you, sweetheart?"

He took a package from his pocket, extracted a cigarette and lighted it. He knew if she tried to light it herself that she would blow out the match, because girls always blow through a cigarette when they light them. He handed it to her. She took a deep draught and inhaled the smoke to the bottom region of her lungs. As she blew it out, she picked some tobacco from her tongue.

"Life's a funny thing, isn't it?" Spug said. "When you think about it. Sometimes I wish I wasn't able to think. Life would be a lot simpler if one couldn't think. I was a lot more contented when I was young. It would be swell not to have any imagination. It would make things a lot easier. Sometimes I get thinking, until I'm nearly nutty, trying to figure out what it's all about. I don't mean the little problems like studying, or eating, or who's going to win the football game. I mean the deeper things. I wonder if we were put on this earth for a purpose or did it all happen by accident. I don't know. I don't know. But then, we're here; we can't change that, so we've got to make the best of it. Every man has got to work out his own destiny the best way he can. For instance, I had to stop drinking. I found I couldn't stand it. It was getting the best of me. Figured that all myself, so I'm off the stuff. But, I guess the man who goes through life with his eyes closed is the happiest. I wish I could do that, but I'm different, because I'm always trying to find out what it's all about. Then again, something happens that makes me think that what is going to happen is going to happen, regardless of anything we try to do about it. That's destiny, I suppose, and all we can do is make the best of it when it happens."

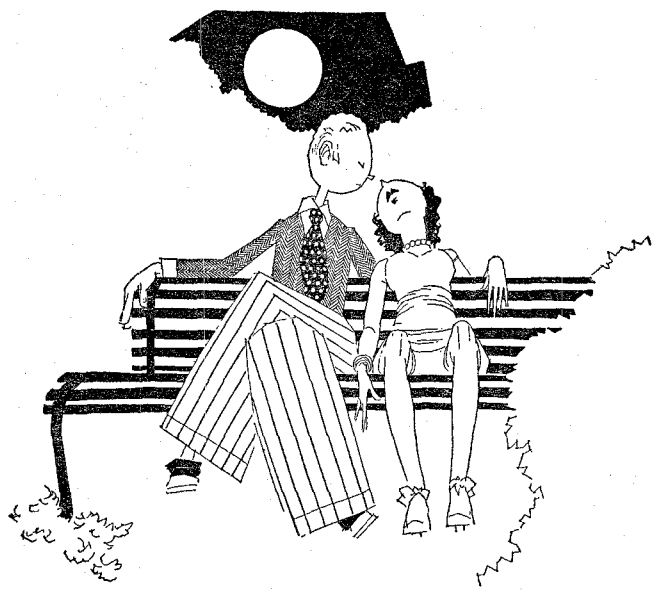
Peggy made no comment. Spug liked that about her; she was a good listener.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That is, she gave a man that impression. They walked on—with slow measured tread. Peggy started to hum softly. She hummed her version of a popular air. She didn't get quite the right notes, what she was humming sounded rather like the classic that the modern composer had borrowed his theme from. Spug continued with his monologue.

"You know, Baby, I've been thinking lately. It's funny how a man will get thinking, isn't it? I've been thinking about life. There's more in it than appears on the surface. You know, life is very complex," Spug went on, without looking at the girl by his side. "I've been trying to figure out a lot of problems. Now take me. When I look back at what I was two years ago, I must of been terrible. I didn't know what the right thing was then. I didn't know the right kind of clothes from the wrong kind; I didn't know about manners, except the wrong steer that Dad and Mother tried to give me. I must have been terrible then. These last two years have made a big difference in my life. I was terribly narrow-minded.

"You wouldn't believe it, but two years ago I actually wore a hat—sounds silly to you, knowing me now, doesn't it? I've found that a man can't learn about life from books. All the old authors are all wrong, because they wrote about the problems of their time, and they're all wet compared to the problems of to-day. Yes, Baby, a man has got to work out his own life according to his own philosophy. A man has to check himself up every so often, otherwise first thing you know, he is drifting with the tide. No, Baby, it's a big mistake for a man of my background to let his emotions govern him. First thing you know, you don't know where you are. Now take some of the other fellows.



She drooped with complete submission.

They believe everything that's told them. They don't think for themselves, and what will the result be? First thing they know, they're on their own, and it's a question of sink or swim, and they're sunk before they start."

"Yes, I understand," said Peggy, but the truth was, she was making no effort to understand.

"That's what I like about you, Baby, a man can talk to you, and you know what he's talking about. You're different from a lot of the other girls around this place," said Spug.

"Oh, I think you're wonderful, Spug. I like to listen to you talk. Let's find a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bench and sit down, my shoes hurt," said Peggy as she started to limp.

They walked on until they were opposite a bench that was shaded from an arc light by a convenient bough of shrubbery, and they sat down.

They sat in silence for a moment. Spug slumped on the bench and placed his arm on the top of the back rest. Peggy sat back against his arm.

"Go on, talk to me some more, Spug," pleaded Peggy. But Spug was silent, the interruption of sitting down had broken his thread of philosophy. She didn't insist on his talking. So they both just sat and looked at the moon without seeing it. Her hands lay limply in her lap. He reached over and took one of her hands. It was not a demonstration, he just rubbed her fingers and played with her cheap little ring.

"Oh, Spug, I think you're wonderful," she said as she looked at him with liquid eyes. He heaved a deep sigh and his other hand slipped down on her shoulder. She lifted his hand from her lap and pressed it against her chest. If Peggy had been more mature I would say she pressed his hand to her bosom, but she had no bosom. It was still a chest. She drooped with complete submission, and kissed him with parted lips.

The autumn season had come and gone. Winter was in full swing. A heavy snow was falling slowly. All was white until you stepped in the snow, and then the shoes left a dark, wet footprint. All this snowing was going on outside, but inside the room occupied by Spug and his companions the steam was full on. The windows were closed tight, and hermetically sealed with adhesive tape. Spug's chief exercise at this time was blowing smoke rings, and that could not be done with any degree of satisfaction in a place where there was the slightest draft. The air was thick with tobacco fumes, and had been breathed over and over again. Four young men including our Spug were playing poker with a sticky deck of playing cards, using matches for chips. The radio was tuned up to high pitch, and was coming full blast on some dull subject, and no one was listening. The telephone managed to make itself heard above the racket. It was answered by the nearest boy.

"Hey, it's for you, Spug. Sounds like a woman."

"Yeah," said Spug to the phone, and to his companions. "Hey, turn that radio down, this is important."

"Hello," back at the telephone.

"Oh, Spug, is that you? This is Peggy."

"Yeah, what do you want?"

"Oh, Spug, I've got to see you."

"Yeah, what about?"

"Oh, Spug, I can't tell you over the phone. I've got to see you."

"Why can't you tell me now?"

"But, I can't. I just can't, that's all."

"Well, if you can't tell me now, it can't be very important."

"But it is important, I tell you. I've got to see you."

"Where are you?"

"Then you will see me? I'm at the drug store."

"I didn't say I'd see you. I'm awfully busy right now."

"Whether you're busy or not, I've got to see you."

"Wouldn't to-morrow do? I tell you, I'm busy!"

"Oh hang up and deal these cards. It's your deal," called his companions at cards.

Spug pulled a wry face at them.

"No, to-morrow may be too late, I've

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

got to see you now. I can't tell you over the phone. I've got to talk to you. I've got to see you!"

"All right," he said with disdain. "I'll be right down."

"Oh, Spug, I've got to see you. I'll wait here at the drug store."

Spug hung up the receiver and ran his fingers through his hair.

"You birds play three-handed until I get back. I've got to go down and see a fellow who wants to sell a Buick."

He put on a pair of galoshes over his house slippers and struggled into a moth-eaten raccoon coat.

"I won't be long," he said as he stood with the door open.

"Shut that door!" thundered the other three as with one loud voice, so he went out slamming the door.

Peggy was waiting at the same place as usual, near the drug store door.

"What do you want to see me about?" said Spug.

"Oh, hello, Spug, I can't tell you here, let's walk."

"If it's so important, why don't you tell me now?"

"Oh, Spug, I can't here. It's too—too—well, important."

"Well, come on then."

They started down the same street where they had walked last fall. They walked without speaking, faster than before, and they unconsciously arrived at the same bench where they had sat in the yellow moonlight. He brushed the snow from the bench with the skirts of his overcoat, and they sat down. There was no moon this time, and the heavy snow continued to fall slowly. Spug spoke:

"Now, for Pete's sake, what's on your mind?"

She hesitated.

"Oh, Spug, I hate to have to tell you, but—but—it's—I'm——"

"Come on, come on, I've got to get back."

"Spug, remember, I told you I was frightened that night?"

"Yeah, well, what was there to frighten you?"

"Well, I'm terribly frightened now. I'm having——"

"Come on, spill it, Baby. I've got to get back. I can't sit here all week."

"Spug, darling, I'm—I'm going to—oh, Spug, you know."

"Yeah—are you—sure?"

"Of course, I'm sure, what did you think? I haven't——"

"Yeah, I know, but are you sure?"

"Oh, Spug, I'm positive."

"Well, what do you want me to do?"

"Oh, Spug. If father finds out, he'll kill you."

"Yeah, how is he going to find out?"

"Oh, he'll know in time. Then he'll make me tell him who it was."

"What's the big idea, Baby, trying to scare me with your father?"

"No, of course I'm not, Spug. But what can I do?"

"It's easy enough to get fixed up."

"But, Spug, you'll have to help me."

"Yeah, I know. All right. I get my money from home in a couple of days, then I'll see you, so don't worry any more. And listen, Baby, you aren't scaring me. I don't know if you're on the level or not and I haven't any way of finding out, except when you say it. And you know darned well you've got everything on your side. I haven't got a chance. You know the whole world is for you in a case of this kind. They believe you and I'm stuck. You've got the policemen on your side. The law will protect you, and it's laying for me."

He saw she was crying. He was always a little embarrassed when a woman cried, so he assumed a more masculine

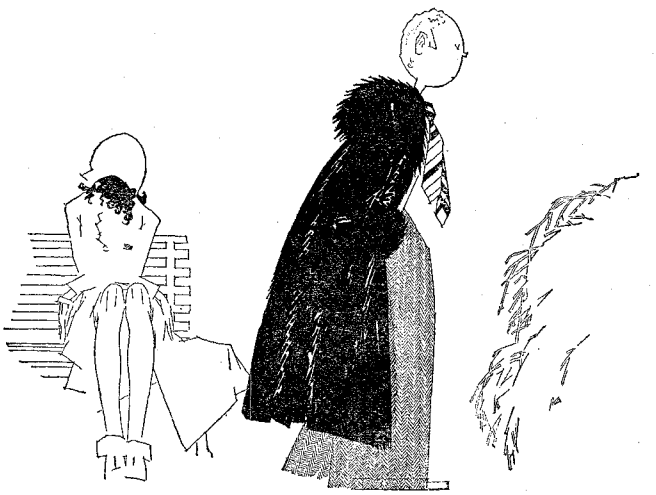
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

manner. He petted the shoulder of her rain coat.

"I tell you, Baby, that's my philosophy. In a case of this kind I always take a woman's word."

He rose to his feet.

"I'll see you in a couple of days when my check comes. Call me up. I've got to go back to the house now and see a man about a Buick."



To a Friend

By Robert Nathan

So to distil the spirit from the grain,
Men take the essence rather than the meat,
The strong and fiery humors which have lain
Through sun and shower waiting in the wheat.
The spring's persuasion and the summer's heat
Make a fierce fluid which is left to turn
Milder and mellow, likable and sweet
In the charred bosom of a wooden urn.

So in my heart the hidden hand distils
His untried juices from the flowery loam.
You are the cask in which that liquor spills,
The cradle of my essence, and my home;
My love, my wisdom, and my sweetest song,
Wherein my spirit ripens and grows strong.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Seeing Americans First

WHAT RECENT BIOGRAPHIES REVEAL

BY GEORGE McLEAN HARPER

THE amiable and profitable art of praising current books, especially those written by American authors, is practised with much success in this country. There are multitudes of people who have no idea what to read until somebody tells them. Yet to decide what one shall read is almost as important as choosing one's friends, and is not always easy. The difficulty is increased by the confusing cries of "Lo here!" and "Lo there!" uttered by many advertisers and reviewers. To the bewildered seeker all lines seem to be down, all distinctions removed, all elevations levelled. By heating the bulb with blazing superlatives the mercury of admiration is driven so high along the scale of values that zero and boiling-point appear to be the same. The long-expected great American novel is born annually at least; the greatest short story ever written is welcomed every month; and readers by the fifty thousand trustfully take the word of publishers for the supreme excellence of new poems.

To be silent when so many are singing, or to lift up now and then a voice of protest, is to defy "the organized forces of society," that is, as they say now in Italy, to be a "subversive." When the books are biographies of Americans, something even more sacred than mass approval attaches to them; they are part of the great American system, one more reason for patriotic enthusiasm, and to hint that there is any ugliness or bleakness in the scenes which they depict or that some of their heroes are commonplace and some detestable, is to charge oneself with treason.

I happen to have read nearly all the biographies of Americans by Americans which were published in the years 1927 and 1928. Some of the subjects were surprising. Some of the writing was extraordinarily bad, though amusing. About half of the books were dull, though not as deadly dull as poor novels. I have a generous, though, I trust, not altogether undiscriminating appetite for biography, being of the opinion that any man might say with old Sir Thomas Browne, "Now for my life, it is a miracle, which to relate, were not a History, but a piece of Poetry, and would sound to common ears like a Fable." Having once begun to read the life of an actual man or woman, I am irresistibly drawn to persevere to the end, no matter how insignificant the person or how stupid the writing; whereas it must be an extremely good novel that can hold my attention after I have passed the middle point, by which time the atmosphere has been created, the characters have been revealed, and there is nothing left but to unravel the plot.

At any rate, seventy new biographies of Americans by Americans have I read in the last two years. Some dealt with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

great and well-known personages; others, and not the least interesting, with quite minor and obscure figures. All these books are expensively printed and bound, and the prices are in many cases large. Evidently publishers believe they can count on an enormous appetite for biography. There has been a sudden increase in the supply, and the causes of this were, first, the immense sales of Mr. Strachey's "Eminent Victorians" and "Queen Victoria," and secondly, the perhaps only temporary popularity of the new method of turning out biography in the form of fiction, as exemplified in M. Maurois's "Ariel." A third form of allurement has ceased to charm, namely, the blackening of reputations. A few notorious examples of biographical mud-slinging seem to have disgusted the public rather than stimulated desire for more, and to put down the mighty from their seats is no longer profitable.

The entire seventy probably include no permanent addition to literature, though some of them are important, some amusing, and some even unique as revelations of human types and conditions. To certain books of these three kinds I shall make particular reference later. What was most striking, however, and of extreme interest, was the total effect of reading all these lives in a short time. In no other way could I, for example, have got an idea of what Americans like to think they are like. Here are the aims and standards of the American spirit, set forth, without collusion or previous conference, by many authors in the hope that the books will be accepted and enjoyed by millions of American readers. From them one can form an idea of what Americanism is. They have the American flavor. No doubt every country has its flavor. I have experienced this feeling of national peculiarity nowhere so strongly as in Scotland. In America I generally have a keener sense of locality than of nationality; but these seventy biographies have some things in common which transcend regional boundaries. The similarity is indeed not so much in the persons written about as in the writers, their aims, methods, language, and manner of thought. There is not much in common, for example, between General Horace Porter, Bishop Fallows, Mrs. Jefferson Davis, and Eugene Field; but there is great similarity in the sentimental tone and the confiding spirit of their biographers. We are expected to take an interest in the Porter furniture, the domestic pleasantries of the Fallows household, the social vanities of Mrs. Davis, and the idle pranks of Eugene Field. This amiable, but somewhat intrusive, *naïveté* runs through nearly all recent American biography. It is almost a welcome relief to come to a thoroughly dull and stodgy book like Mr. H. D. Sedgwick's "Lafayette" or Mr. Allan Nevins's "John C. Frémont." In most of them small family matters, of no general importance and no specific artistic value as elements of the portrait, are complacently set forth, a practice learned perhaps from Amy Lowell's "Keats." Quite properly, and inevitably, the social life portrayed in most of these books is parochial. This is what gives them their chief value. The political spirit of the writers is as a rule extremely nationalistic, which is not so commendable. In Mary Agnes Best's "Thomas Paine," for example, the French and English parts of his career are slighted and the American part is treated with disproportionate detail.

On the whole one gets the impression that American life reached higher intel-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lectual levels in the eighteenth century than in the first quarter of the nineteenth. Separation from the mother country resulted, during a period of thirty or forty years, in mental malnutrition. It appears that in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, fifty years of too rapid geographical expansion, our population was extremely restless, that the people who settled the country west of the Alleghenies made an enormous sacrifice of things needful for civilization, always planting, seldom staying to reap the fruits. Men changed their occupations with astonishing facility. They were versatile, buoyant, irrepressible, and those were happy times for robust people. Craftsmanship, however, suffered from slipshod methods; hotels and restaurants were wretched, public means of travel were painful, education was badly organized, journalism was at a low point.

These are peculiarities of the past. But there is one permanent deficiency of American life which these biographies make very evident, namely the lack of social groups drawn together and held together by intellectual affinity. While Americans are often hail-fellow-well-met with one another, and a genuine warmth of human appreciation undoubtedly lies behind much of our back-slapping expansiveness, there are fewer instances of deep friendship between fellow workers, fewer groups of congenial spirits, than one discovers in reading British and European biography. Loneliness is still, as a rule, the fate of people in America who devote themselves to art, philosophy, science, and that part of political endeavor which is not merely concerned with immediate practice. Intellectual culture and political progress depend so vitally upon the heat and light produced by intimate, friendly conference, that the want of it in American life has no doubt greatly retarded our civilization. These reflections are almost forced upon one who reads Judge Robert W. Winston's notable biography of Andrew Johnson, Mr. Ray Stannard Baker's invaluable "Woodrow Wilson," Mr. Gamaliel Bradford's "Dwight L. Moody," and especially Mr. Busby's "Uncle Joe Cannon." Andrew Johnson was right in his politics, but he had to defend them single-handed. Wilson led a rich and full existence, but as compared with that of the great British statesmen of his generation he suffered from the lack of a supporting (and contradicting) group of congenial intellects. Compared with Asquith or Haldane or Grey or Balfour, he stood alone. If to Moody's power as a religious orator had been added the intellectual breadth which even the busiest men can derive from conversation with experts, he would have left a more lasting impression on the religious life of the country. There was richer intellectual culture in the circle of Jonathan Edwards and many other eighteenth-century divines. If the reader doubts this let him turn to the fascinating volume of selections from their letters and journals entitled "The Heart of the Puritan," made by Miss Elizabeth Deering Hanscom. And there was vastly more political philosophy in the circle of Thomas Paine than in the taciturn, sinister, suspicious, and unsocial atmosphere of Uncle Joe Cannon, for all its smoke and slang.

Another impression from the seventy books is so unfavorable that I merely mention it, with averted face, and pass on: it is that we are undeniably a boastful people. Another, and happily this time favorable, is that we are irrepressibly cheerful and hopeful. Whether a people can without detriment to their

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

culture deceive themselves into thinking all is for the best in the best of all possible countries and this country their own, is, however, a question to which there can be only one answer.

Of course it is inexact to speak of "the American spirit," for if these biographies show us nothing else they reveal the heterogeneous composition of our people. We are not a race, and until the Civil War we were not quite a nation. Even for Americans of the eighteenth century the easy formula that they consisted of New England "Puritans" and Southern "Cavaliers," has had to be abandoned, because it was absolutely false. With some difficulty it has at last been made clear that there were Dutch in New York and New Jersey, Scotch and Germans in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, and many thousands, both white and black, in the South, who were not "Cavaliers," and English of all sorts everywhere. Still, it is obvious that we are one people, and less diversity of types has been caused by geographical and racial differences than might have been expected. In fact, a reader must be impressed by the weakness of family ties, racial consciousness, and local attachment shown in these seventy lives, taken as a whole. The feeling of blood relationship, with what it implies of responsibility and satisfaction, is less evident here than if the subjects had been French or English. Love of the soil, the actual spot of earth, with its immediate surroundings, where a man was born and brought up, is not very noticeable among these Americans. The deficiency is hard to explain, for hitherto local knowledge and color have been the chief source of interest and charm in American writing, whether prose or verse, fiction or biography. There has been for more than a century much straining to express nation-wide sentiment and national character, but without corresponding success. No writer has yet included in his grasp "the American spirit." To claim that Whitman did so is absurd, for he is little read by the masses, who do not find their own portrait in his pages, while the *literati* admire him, not because he depicts themselves, but, as they fondly imagine, the masses. The surest way to produce a readable book about American life is to write about some narrowly limited geographical area or some particular breed of people. For example, among recent American biographies some of the most interesting chapters are those in Mr. Burton J. Hendrick's "Early Life and Letters of Walter H. Page," in which is portrayed the extremely provincial life of North Carolina for a generation after the Civil War. Another case in point is the early part of Judge Winston's "Andrew Johnson." The value of Mr. Skeyhill's "Sergeant York" lies in the contrast it presents between the extremely secluded and peculiar character of the Tennessee mountaineers and the larger currents of national and foreign life. It is not without significance that these three books, which are among the best biographies published in 1928, open with studies of isolated Southern communities. It has been well said that every educated Southern woman has in her the material for one fairly good story, because she knows one locality thoroughly, loves it intensely, and imagines it as the scene of a dramatic action, of which she herself and her intimate acquaintances are the characters. In other words, she could produce a biography within a narrow and thoroughly understood local frame. Unfortunately when the localization is too complete and the characters are too highly idealized, as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is the case with a recent life of Mrs. Jefferson Davis, and one of Mrs. Lincoln, the writers fall into sentimentality.

It would be easy to make fun of some of these seventy biographies—of those which falsely idealize Southern aristocracy, the "old family" traditions of Philadelphia (as in Mr. Bradley's "G. H. Boker"), the furniture of a New York house (as in Mrs. Mende's "General Horace Porter"), the lack of furniture in certain minds (as in half a dozen lives of not very important persons written by their descendants); of the perfunctory or official pictures of really important men who were, however, not in any sense picturesque (as Peter K. Guilday's "Life and Times of John England," Roman Catholic Bishop of South Carolina, and Dr. Felix Adler's "Jacob H. Schiff" and Edward S. Delaplaine's "Thomas Johnson"); but resisting the temptation, for even dull books can be valuable, and these are faithful records of worthy persons, I turn to a little group of the picaresque variety. Among them is Mr. D. T. Lynch's "Boss Tweed," which is happily an unwhitewashed tale, and Mr. Don Seitz's "The James Gordon Bennetts," an unnecessary book on a sickening subject, yet instructive as a revelation of predatory journalism. Another of these ill-written books about human sharks is the life of Victoria Woodhull, by Emanie Sachs. Fortunately the authors have not thought it necessary either to defend or to denounce the horrid sharks.

Four very readable books are Mary White Ovington's "Portraits in Color," an encouraging record of the achievements of a dozen American negroes; Mr. Walter Lippman's "Men of Destiny," a survey of certain prominent public characters of to-day; Mr. Paul de Kruif's "The Hunger Fighters," sketches of persons who have aided agriculture and public health, a lively but atrociously written book; and Mr. William Allen White's "Masks in a Pageant," journalistic and not always accurate portraits of contemporaries. A book which narrates the rise of a poor Jewish immigrant to a position of power and usefulness is Senator Antin's autobiography, "The Gentleman from the 22nd." It is vastly more refreshing than Mr. Busby's "Uncle Joe Cannon," which is really also an autobiography, in the main. Mr. Floyd Dell's "Upton Sinclair," though premature, is at least useful in showing how a man who expresses "heretical" principles in economics is liable to be hounded by the press.

The recent biographies of American religious leaders, among which Mr. Gamaliel Bradford's "Dwight L. Moody" is perhaps the most important, Mr. Asbury's "A Methodist Saint" the most unfilial and disrespectful, the life of Bishop Fallows the most interesting, all give one the impression that these preachers and organizers showed more activity of body than of mind, more business capacity than philosophical grasp or penetration. Of course it would be unfair to expect to find a Jonathan Edwards in every century, but it is true, nevertheless, that his theological acumen, his intellectual passion, and his literary style have not yet been equalled on this continent.

Mr. McCoy's "This Man Adams" and Mr. Woodward's "Meet General Grant," especially the latter, are better than the silly titles would lead one to suppose they could be. A life of Hawthorne by Mr. Lloyd Morris, is, however, as inadequate as its title, "The Rebellious Puritan: Portrait of Mr. Hawthorne." One would hardly gather from this work that Hawthorne was our greatest im-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aginative genius and the author of immortal romances; rather he is depicted as a bungling, ill-placed, and unhappy man of whom a biographer may presume to speak condescendingly as "Nathaniel." A similar lack of appreciation is shown in Mr. Atkinson's "Henry D. Thoreau," but this is splendidly offset by Mr. Odell Shepherd's "The Heart of Thoreau's Journal." Even more delightful than this last is Clara Burras's "The Heart of Burroughs's Journals." And while I am referring to books which are not precisely biographies, I wish to record my opinion that one of the bravest and most informing and most important of recent American works is "Life and Death in Sing Sing," by Warden Lewis E. Lawes. I believe no one can read it without determining to do what he can to abolish capital punishment.

In addition to these three last mentioned books, there are ten, out of the seventy, which seem to me to possess considerable value, both because they are well written, in their several ways, and because they illuminate the American scene. First comes a group of three biographies of men unlettered but trained in the school of adventure and danger: Kit Carson, the plainsman, Cap'n George Fred, the whaler, Sergeant York, the peace-loving mountaineer from Tennessee who captured a German machine-gun company in the World War. The pages in which York's wrestlings with his conscience are described, as he, a pacifist, prayed for guidance when his application for exemption from the draft was denied, are of profound and poignant interest. These three books would make good reading for boys, and that is one of the best things one can say of any book.

A happy pair are the lives of Madame Schumann-Heink and Eddie Cantor. Here again we see the up-welling of foreign strains in our seething mixture, and realize what America means to many a gifted alien. Eddie Cantor's joyous little sketch of his career, "My Life is in Your Hands," is amazing and amusing.

Then we have five works of larger scope, all of them on important subjects and well written: Mr. Charles Edward Russell's "Theodore Thomas and the American Orchestra," Mildred Howells's "Life and Letters of W. D. Howells," General Hugh Lenox Scott's "Some Memories of a Soldier," Judge Robert W. Winston's "Andrew Johnson," and Mr. Burton J. Hendrick's "The Training of an American: Early Life and Letters of Walter H. Page."

The career of Theodore Thomas shows that "Peace hath her victories," which though unfortunately not yet "no less renowned than War," are in the end more decisive and lasting. When he came to this country from Germany, in 1845, he found here a public which had made up its mind that it could not and would not enjoy good music. It went wild over infant prodigies, and acrobats who played the drum with their feet, the trumpet with their lips, the violin with their hands, and the piano with their noses, all at the same time. In accordance with what was considered upstanding Americanism, it disclaimed susceptibility to the charm of the "classical," avowing with robust humility that "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "Home Sweet Home" were good enough for it. In fact the public taste was barbaric, and we have seen in the last twenty years that a relapse is always possible on the part of a large number. Thomas patiently educated a civilized audience here and there, by introducing a little real music and then more and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more of it into his programmes. He stands out, now, in Mr. Russell's fine book, as a great public benefactor.

Miss Howells's collection of her father's letters is a valuable contribution to the history of literature. It is also part of the great American story, recording, as it does, the progress of a true-hearted, high-minded youth with literary aspirations to a commanding position among the men of letters in his time.

General Scott's book is the most readable of all these longer works. It is the record of a great pacifier. He has probably saved more lives than any man in our country. He has done it by walking boldly and in a friendly spirit into the councils of Indians and Moros who were on the point of going on the war-path and persuading them to remain at peace. The record is full of chivalrous adventures as noble as any in the chronicles of Joinville or Froissart, but being

> "Not sedulous by nature to indite
> Wars, hitherto the only argument
> Heroic deemed,"

though he might have done so, had he chosen, this modern knight relates the triumphs of conciliation, good sense, and kindness. Froissart, writing in 1385, said with unconcealed zest that in the preceding fifty years "there had been done more marvellous deeds of arms in the world than in the three hundred years before that." To him and to other men of the privileged classes in his age, war was a divinely offered opportunity to win glory, or at least it was a beautiful sport. After our recent experiences we feel differently. It is one of the few compensations derivable from the ghastly conflict that it has left no glamour in our minds, no evil heritage of military heroes, no Napoleonic legend, to entice and betray posterity. There were thousands of real heroes, but it seems likely that the names of all the commanders will be forgotten before the sense of horror has passed away. The romance of war has gone. The happiest feature of General Scott's book is that it shows how a humane man, even when not backed by physical power, can by the patient exercise of reason subdue the passions of angry adversaries.

Judge Winston's "Andrew Johnson" rehabilitates a shamefully slandered reputation and sets a great President in his proper historical position not far below Lincoln and immeasurably above the hot-heads, fanatics, and traitors who made his career so painful and difficult.

Mr. Hendrick's "Early Life and Letters of Walter H. Page" is a genial, inspiring record and has an epical character, in that the hero was a representative man, representative of the New South and of a new spirit in world politics. He was the most outspoken prophet of what we hope is to be the New World, in which Americanism, Patriotism, Nationalism, while still retaining their proper educative and regulative functions, shall be dominated and outshone by Something Higher.

The time has not yet come for an estimate of Mr. Baker's "Woodrow Wilson." But when we consider it and the best ten or twelve of the books mentioned above, we may well feel that biography, a difficult combination of science and art, has been enriched in the last two years, and has revealed many interesting varieties of American character.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marriage on a Fifty-Fifty Basis

BY MARY MARGARET McBRIDE

How is the new freedom affecting husbands? Here are observations and citation of cases which add an interesting bit of evidence to the still raging debate.

For a good while now discussion of the "new order" or new standards has been solely in relation to the effect on women.

We continually attempt, not always successfully, to dissect and analyze the feminine reaction to greater freedom in all phases of life—to marriage, divorce, education, career, and wage-earning.

About industry we are variously assured that woman is as good as any man at any job, that she is far better than any man, and that she is not half so good as the poorest man at most jobs!

From authoritative sources we learn that keeping up a career after marriage unfits a woman for motherhood, fits her for motherhood, completely satisfies her, tires her out!

And so it goes. Literally, millions of words have been used to phrase these contradictory opinions, all of which are interesting and some of which undoubtedly are useful. But until we know what the new freedom for women means or may mean to the man in the case, it seems to me that we have only considered one factor in a problem where two factors are equally important.

While the wife is experimenting with her new freedom, while she is engaged in her modern task of making a home and a career at the same time, what exactly is happening to the husband, the man who for ages has been the breadwinner, the protector, who has borne with the pride of exclusive right and duty the responsibilities of the family? The world has looked to him as the sole builder and arbiter of the family's fortunes, and in his own mind there has been a true satisfying reflection of the world's opinion of his status.

He, like the wife, finds himself in a situation at war with tradition. He, too, must make adjustments that lead no one knows whither. In the first place, he must share at least the breadwinner part of his old rôle with his career-seeking wife. This would not be so serious if it were merely a matter of mathematics—her earnings plus his own in a common pool—but it goes deeper than finances. The real issue he must face is that with a wife on her own, he has lost not only his old place as family provider but also the sense of overlordship, or call it what you will, that through all time has meant so much to him.

Where MacGregor sits has always been the head of the table; but will it, can it, be so when the wife measures earnings and matches achievements with him, consciously or otherwise, or, as sometimes happens, when he must check up his failure against her success? What will such new conditions do to the amour propre of the old-fashioned husband, the heretofore proud head and front of the family?

What is the fate of the man who has married a self-supporting wife—that is, a wife who insists upon paying her half of all the bills?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I shall answer this question as a reporter would, by presenting facts. And because I try to be as open-minded a reporter as possible, I am often at a loss when the time comes to draw conclusions.

The subject interests me particularly just now because an intimate friend of mine recently had a chance to become such a wife. She went back to her old home town fully resolved to marry a young man there who proposed to her six years ago—provided, of course, he should still be in the mood.

He proposed again all right, but, to her chagrin, suggested that they undertake marriage on a fifty-fifty basis. She refused, and her real reasons for refusing are precisely those set forth in this article—that is, in the stories of five fifty-fifty marriages as told me by the feminine halves of them.

Of course the young man was acting on his recollection of the way my friend had dwelt on the advantages of careers for women when she left home to go to the big city. No doubt he felt extremely sophisticated and daring when he sprang his new-fangled proposition. How was he to know that a poll of self-supporting married women in New York or any large city would disclose some strange dissatisfactions with the fifty-fifty arrangement as it exists to-day?

But let us to the promised facts.

Alice is a writer and a good one. Her witty, human prose has had some vogue lately, and even in the days when I first met her she was earning an excellent living for herself. Though she was known as Miss, I heard that she had been married and divorced. Later, she told me of her former husband—a well-to-do broker who was amiable but slightly vulgar, and he just didn't wear well and knew it. Fortunately, he was willing to agree to a divorce and even good-naturedly offered alimony. This Alice refused. She said rather grandiloquently that she would never again take money from a man. Then, as became a free soul, she went to live in Greenwich Village.

Vincent was introduced at somebody's party. Everybody, including young Vincent himself, believed that he would some day make his mark. He was accustomed to discourse at length on the horrors of prostituting one's art and the shame of pot-boilers. A few poems of his had been published in a magazine that did not pay for contributions and he was writing a novel. Meantime a small fixed income kept him going—not speedily, but at a fair pace.

He affected Alice strangely. She had been content with herself and her achievements, but suddenly she developed an acute case of self-criticism. She reflected forlornly that Vincent probably classed her with the other loathed commercialists. She determined to correct that impression; he must think better of her. She invited him to dinner and he accepted. One of Alice's finest accomplishments was cooking, while one of Vincent's favorite pastimes was eating. It was a happy combination.

Alice beamed upon him. She had thought that her experience with men was to end with Sam, the business man, who had wanted only a wife, not a woman. Now she was not quite so sure.

Vincent felt a stir, too, agreeably compounded of Alice's charm and the toothsomeness of the inch-and-a-half steak. He came to dine again, and then again. In time he assumed the status of a perpetual dinner-guest. Alice liked to hear him discuss literature and his contemplated contributions to it. He was not loath to oblige.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

After one particularly delightful dinner—it happened also that the postman had left two rejection slips that morning—Vincent suggested getting married.

Alice agreed. By this time she was really in love and wanted nothing so much as to have Vincent entirely for her own.

After a ceremony at City Hall, the newly-weds went to live in Alice's apartment. There was no need to discuss where the home was to be. Vincent's, up to now, had been a hall bedroom three flights up—obviously an impossible residence for two.

He handsomely said that he wanted to do his part in the new arrangement and Alice suggested that he pay her each month what his room had cost. That seemed fair to him and he added graciously that he would also stand his half of the meals and half the wages of the three-times-a-week cleaning woman. Alice prepared meals and tidied the house daily, which didn't count.

Vincent made himself much at home. The color scheme of his workroom had to be altered because he abominated blue. He demanded quiet during certain hours so that he could write. Although Alice used her apartment as an office, the telephone must be muffled mornings because it disturbed her new husband.

His ambition was lagging a little, though he would not have admitted that. Really, from his point of view there was no particular reason to work hard. His little income took care of all necessities, and Alice saw to it that he had luxuries now and then—a quilted bathrobe from an expensive shop, exquisite linen, and the like. The young poet began to require more time for sleep and meditation, and Alice's friends made clucking sounds of pity.

Some thought she ought to be spoken to, but no one had the courage to do it. She continued to be devoted and he seemed to revel in her devotion. Came a day, though, when, quite suddenly, he moved out of his comfortable lodgings and back into a hall bedroom. It wasn't even such a comfortable room this time, for careless investments had upset the fixed income.

There was no quarrel. No harsh words passed. The two smiled when they met; they spoke kindly of each other and to each other.

Alice got her divorce two years ago. To-day, to everybody's amazement, Vincent is better known as a writer than is she.

He had grown accustomed to luxury that his depleted income could not provide and, thrown on his own resources, he set out immediately to do what he had always deplored—commercialize his art. Necessity prodded him into becoming a financial success. A devoted careering wife, instead of stirring him to rival her efforts, had given him a sense of security without great effort—dependence had stifled energy and ambition.

Alice still has her apartment and her work. When she told me this story, there were tears in her eyes. She said that if any young woman ever asks her advice about marriage, she will advise clinging.

"The average man," she asserted, "needs to be depended on. It undermines his sense of responsibility to know that his wife can get on without him. Vincent will make some clinging vine a fine husband one of these days. He will want to wrap her in cotton-wool, and if she's wise she'll let him. I was too self-sufficient."

Jane, a bright little girl from a New Hampshire village, gives shampoos and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sets marcels for a living. One day last spring she let the electric dryer stay on so long that she almost scorched me. When I mildly protested, she burst into tears.

"I guess I'm getting absent-minded because I'm so worried," she sobbed, and then the whole story came out.

Three years ago she married a young man with a good job. Neither had saved much and both were anxious to get ahead. It was Jane's suggestion that she go on working for a while and that they share household expenses.

"I thought I'd work about a year," she explained to me, "just until we could save enough to make a down payment on a little place of our own. I wanted a house out in the suburbs somewhere, with a garden and maybe a front porch. And I figured that after we got the place partly paid for, I could stop work and maybe have a kid or two.

"My husband felt the same way. He talked as much as I did about saving for a home. He's a good fellow—never looks at another woman and so nice to have around. Nothing you can say makes him really angry or nasty the way some men get. All the same, I'm just miserable.

"You see, he just takes it for granted now that we'll always go on this way, with me paying my share of the expenses. He doesn't realize, of course, that when we both come home tired at night, I'm the one that has to pitch in and get supper.

"Afterward he generally offers to dry the dishes and then sits down to read the paper, feeling that he's helped a lot and not thinking or caring that I've still got our darning and mending to do, and my underthings to wash out. Mornings, too, I have the place to straighten up, but he never realizes. For all the notice men take of things, you'd suppose houses kept themselves.

"But that isn't the worst of it. The most terrible thing is that my husband is further off from being able to support me and a family right now than he was the day I married him. Then at least he was working every day and drawing down pretty good pay. But last week he only worked two days—and the week before he was out all week long.

"In the three years we've been married he's lost five jobs, though, mind you, I don't exactly say he's to blame. Only he always seems to be the one that's laid off if they begin to cut down. I guess he thinks that so long as I'm working, keeping his own job doesn't matter much. If I'd been dependent on him and we'd had a kid he might still lose his job but he'd have to find another. And he'd find it. It's awful, and if I try to talk to him, his feelings get hurt and I feel like a dog."

Later I saw Jane's husband when he called for her at the hair-dressing place, and the minute I laid eyes on him I saw exactly what she meant. He had nice eyes and an agreeable smile, but there was something lax and indefinite-looking about his mouth and chin. Maybe they would have been different if he had been given more family responsibility—anyway, Jane believes so. To my relief, she was not asking for advice.

Dorothy, who is another story, was not seeking advice, either. She came to me because she had to talk to somebody and because we had been classmates at the university.

Dorothy is an interior decorator. With taste, tact, and an instinctive feel for textiles and color, she has gone far in her profession. She works ten and twelve hours a day, and was therefore a little

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

annoyed when she fell head over heels in love with Jack. She didn't want her work interrupted by love.

Jack was at that time a fairly prosperous writer. With average luck he earned from four to six thousand a year. His stories were frankly commercial, but he yearned to write the great American novel, and his ambition was to save up money enough to work steadily for a year at something really worth while. Dorothy sympathized with him in this ambition.

So it was that when Jack asked her to marry him she said yes on condition that they try the fifty-fifty plan, each to put so much a month into a common fund for living expenses, and beyond that neither to have any claim on what the other earned. They were married in the Little Church Around the Corner. Now Dorothy confesses that the venture is a failure.

"I thought I was leaving Jack free to write a great book," she said. "I believed that I was only being fair to him. Oh, I had grand ideals and saw no reason why they shouldn't work. At the same time, of course, I was devoted to my own work and wanted to go ahead with it. But I can honestly say that my decision about our marriage was for Jack's sake more than for my own. I was so much in love that if he had wanted me to, I was ready to become a devoted wife and mother. It would have been a wrench and I was glad he didn't ask it, but now I wish he had, because I know that I've done a terrible thing to him—killed his ambition, perhaps—at least stunted it.

"You see, I make more money than he does now (twelve thousand a year) and he resents it, and shows his resentment all the time. When we were first married he used to give me presents—little things, most of them, but I loved them. Now he never gives me anything. He tells me bitterly sometimes that he doesn't because I can buy better ones for myself! What he doesn't seem to realize is that there's no thrill to a present you buy for yourself. And he's never started his book. Sometimes I think he's lost all desire to do it.

"Don't quote authorities on feminism to me! I believe that every man has to have somebody to work for, somebody who thinks he's the grandest man in the world and who'll tell him so with every breath. I know it would have been better for Jack if he had married a clinging vine."

Theresa is a lawyer. So is Everett, her husband. The couple live in a smart apartment-hotel on a fifty-fifty basis. Theresa isn't sure where the weakness is, but she knows they aren't making a go of marriage.

"We just don't seem to be like other husbands and wives," she moans. "I don't know what it is. For instance, he always flies into a temper if we try to talk about cases. And then he belittles my opinion and tries to run down my law learning. He used to be the sweetest, politest man in the world. But now! If it's my work he's jealous of, we might as well quit now, because I'll never give it up. But I can't think it's really that. Perhaps we are just antagonistic, spiritually. Certainly, he doesn't seem to mind that I support myself. He even collects my half of the tip when we eat together in a restaurant!"

Perhaps the saddest story of all is that of Sue, a little stenographer I had who gave up her job after a year of married independence because a baby was coming.

"And now Hal grumbles all the time because he has to earn the living by him-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

self," she told me when the baby was two months old. "He raves every time I ask for money and I nearly go crazy with shame. You'd never dream that he's the same man who used to beg me not to go out to work. It spoiled him, that's what it did, for me to support myself and half the house. Believe me, just as soon as the baby's old enough, I'm going to put her in a nursery and go right back to work. Sometimes I think I'll leave Hal, too, but maybe he won't be so bad when I'm working again."

I am not sure that Sue is wise to go back to work. Perhaps her baby is affording a chance to take up clinging in a serious way. I keep remembering the other four women who wailed in almost childish despair: "Even if I wanted to, I wouldn't know how to start now!"

That seems to be the difficulty of all the fifty-fifty wives. For the sake of their husbands' souls they would leave off earning their way and standing on their own feet, but they don't know how to begin, and some of them are afraid that it's too late. Their experiment has already worked only too well. The general conclusion seems to agree with Sue's experience that once a husband gets accustomed to the kind of wife who shares expenses and at the same time makes out his laundry and sees that his shirt-studs are in, his moral fibre disintegrates, he loses ambition, pride, and the sense of responsibility that all male creatures seem to be born with.

Of course, I hasten to add, some men have survived the ordeal of a wage-earning wife, but so far as I can find out, they are the ones whose fifty-fifty marriages were modified at the start to save masculine pride.

One husband whose income is at least equalled by his wife's insists that his money shall run their home. All expenses are paid from his pocketbook and the wife puts the greater part of her earnings into what they call an old-age fund. Perhaps Allan is only postponing the day when his wife will support herself, but at any rate the marriage on its present basis runs as smoothly as any I know.

Another happy couple, both artists, work together, use a double signature for their illustrations, and have a joint bank-account. The husband is the salesman and business manager of this family enterprise. He confers with editors, settles prices, plans new efforts, and directs his wife's work. With them there is no mine and thine, but the husband is unquestionably the business head of the household.

Another careering wife of my acquaintance supports her aged parents and pays for a maid with her earnings. Her husband does not find this arrangement galling to his pride, for the wife explains the maid as her own substitute in the home.

I can think of at least three wives of considerable ability who serve as aids to their artistic husbands, sacrificing their own work when necessary.

These cases and similar ones would seem to indicate that fifty-fifty marriages, based on love, can be made successful if the wife is tactful enough to permit masculine dignity to assert itself.

It is only when man feels himself revealed to the world as unessential to the maintenance of his household that he becomes morose—it staggers him to lose his old feeling of superiority, his title to family leadership.

A man who has a wife and cannot keep her—and cannot, like Peter Pumpkin-Eater, put her in a pumpkin-shell—loses caste in the eyes of other men.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nor is this a light matter. Any condition that imposes a sense of inferiority is, of course, a serious condition. For generations women fought that condition and sought to rise above it. It is a fine bit of irony that men should now be confronted with a similar dilemma.

And further irony—the wise woman, realizing that her husband is in fact the most childish of her children, must invent some little method for saving his feelings and preserving his place before the world, and particularly before himself.

In short, the modern woman, if she wants both marriage and a career, must compromise a bit with the one to preserve the other. But compromise, Heaven knows, is nothing new to her. For generations she has had to practise it, and surely she hasn't forgotten how, even though she travels new paths and engages in battles on her own.

The One-Story Man

BY ABBIE CARTER GOODLOE

Seen from the lake, the little châlet, set high on the side of the Alp up which the flowering spring was rushing, looked like a brown speck against the white of the myriad narcissus blooms. Seen from the sun-warmed loggia of Penrose's villa, its outlines became distinct and alluring. One could make out the big, flat stones scattered over the roof; the ornate band of carving across the front; the small entrance-door and the windows with their coquettish flower-boxes filled with pink geraniums and delphinium, vivid against the dark cypress wood.

But, charming as the little brown châlet was, it must have been several days after my arrival at the Villa Scarlatti before I really noticed it. I had had no thought of staying with the Penroses, but both Ross and Adela simply refused to hear of my going to any of the innumerable hotels that align in serried ranks the shores of Lake Geneva at Montreux and, almost before I knew it, I had promised to spend a week with them and the chauffeur was on his way to the débarcadère to collect my slender luggage. I gathered that at the Villa Scarlatti friends came and went in a most casual and hospitable fashion.

For the moment, however, there happened to be only one other house guest besides myself—a very pleasant young Frenchman, André de Pillot. From Adela I learned that he had been first secretary of the French embassy at Mexico City for several years, that he was home on leave, and that he had come to Montreux to play in the international tennis tournament. Among the many likable things about him was an uncommon talent for drawing. As we sat in the garden, in the cool, sweet-scented mornings, he would make admirable sketches of Adela's splendid fair head against a trellis of climbing roses, or bits of the marvellous panorama of the Savoy Alps spread out before our enchanted eyes.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Late one afternoon as de Pillot and I lounged in the loggia, my eyes, roving up to the Caux-Palace, took in for the first time, the little brown châlet perched gaily half-way up the hillside above us. It struck me as curious that Penrose had never made any reference to it. He was at the piano but I called out to him ruthlessly.

"I say, Penrose, you've never told me who lives up at the little châlet above!" The music stopped abruptly and Penrose, stepping through the French window, came out into the loggia. To my surprise he seemed embarrassed.

"Haven't I?" he said uncertainly. "Well, I don't know who has it now and I don't care. I always think of it as Stuart Hutton's châlet—Hutton used to live up there."

"Hutton!" I shouted. "You don't mean the Stuart Hutton who wrote 'Due East'?"

"Yes—I do."

I gazed at Penrose in stupefaction. Stuart Hutton, the man who had made a tremendous sensation with his two novels, "Dragon's Blood" and "Due East"; who had mysteriously disappeared and had finally committed suicide, had lived on the same hillside with Penrose and he hadn't mentioned the fact!

"I don't talk about him much," Penrose explained briefly in reply to my astonished questioning. "You see, I always liked him—in spite of everything. And—I always blame myself."

Adela, who had joined us, took a chair beside her husband and laid an arm, in a subtly protecting fashion, across his shoulder.

"Ross is absurd," she said, looking in a queerly defiant way at de Pillot and myself, "but he fancies he's partly responsible for Hutton's suicide—or, at least, that he might have done something to prevent it. It's perfectly ridiculous, of course."

"I'd forgotten that Hutton drowned himself in Lake Geneva," I murmured. I was confoundedly sorry I had brought up the matter.

"Hutton?—one of your literary men?" inquired de Pillot. Penrose was staring out across the lake, so I answered for him after an uncomfortable pause.

"Yes. An unusual and interesting affair, I believe, though I don't know anything about it at first hand. It was hushed up, some way or other, wasn't it, Ross?"

"Yes—though Clare Whitney was for having it all aired thoroughly. She was implacable—like all good women when they think they're doing right."

Adela leaned back and, unseen by her husband, shook her lovely head at de Pillot and me.

"Why talk of it?" she said brightly. "It's a rather unpleasant subject——"

"Nonsense! Why shouldn't we talk of it?" demanded Penrose truculently, twisting himself about in his chair.

"Well, you always blame yourself——"

"Yes and anybody else would!" He got up, took a few quick turns about the loggia, puffing nervously at his cigarette. Suddenly he stopped and faced de Pillot and myself.

"Look here!—I'd like to tell you two the story and get your opinion as to whether I was culpably stupid or not. I tell myself I was a damn fool about the whole thing!"

"I couldn't imagine you being 'a damn fool' about anything, my dear monsieur," said the Frenchman, smiling.

"I'd certainly like to hear the story," I ventured and seated myself prepara-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tory to listening. Penrose sank into a chair opposite and lit another cigarette. He waited an instant and then began to speak quickly.

"It all happened a year ago—shortly after we had come up here for the summer. The little brown châlet, which had had an 'à louer' sign on it, suddenly acquired a tenant and I was immensely interested to learn, later, that it was Stuart Hutton who had taken it. Of course Adela and I did the neighborly thing and, soon after his arrival, invited him to dine with us. He declined—much to my regret, for I admired his stuff tremendously—and with such scant courtesy that I decided huffily to leave him strictly alone in future.

"But not long afterward a guest failed us on the eve of a dinner-party and Adela, in despair, suggested that I invite Hutton again. I didn't believe for an instant he would accept the eleventh-hour invitation and I didn't much care, but I thought I'd make the effort for Adela's sake. I went to the telephone and picked up the transmitter. I got him immediately and to my surprise he instantly agreed to come. I put down the phone and turned to Adela.

" 'He says he'll be delighted to accept. Must have had a change of heart!'

"Hutton came, punctual to the minute, and, after the introductions and some perfunctory talk in the music-room, we came out here in the loggia, where Adela had ordered dinner served. It was a lovely night. We spoke almost in whispers at first—afraid of disturbing the enchantment of the scene. But, little by little, the constraint wore off and we became lively enough—all except Hutton, that is. There was an ineradicable look of melancholy in his eyes even when he smiled and said delightful things to Adela, his sleek, dark head bent to hers. He was certainly handsome, I decided as I looked at him across the table. But some note of weakness, the hint of something insecure, unstable in his make-up, jarred on me. He looked—I phrased it to myself rather vaguely—as though he was not the sort to 'carry on.' With it all there was something ingratiating, disarming about him. I took a tremendous fancy to him.

"But, while he appealed to my heart, he somehow disappointed my head. His opinions, his whole attitude of mind, struck me as being banal. I had certainly expected something considerably more stimulating and original from the author of 'Due East.' He was one of those chaps who hold themselves in reserve, save their best for the printed page, I concluded gloomily.

"Under cover of the darkness I studied him at my leisure. Four years before, when 'Dragon's Blood' had appeared, a delighted public had hailed him as a new force in literature and had awaited with flattering interest his next opus. It was unaccountably slow in coming. With the rest of his admirers, I was hard put to it to explain his long silence and I heaved a sigh of relief when at last 'Due East' made its appearance. It was an immense advance over his first novel and in no time had achieved the dubious compliment of becoming a best-seller. The stage and movie rights were bought up at fabulous sums. Hutton became famous at a bound. Women's clubs, from Boston to Walla Walla, bespoke his attendance at crowded functions in his honor; theatrical, literary, social organizations elected him to membership with, and without, his consent; tentative overtures were made him from half a dozen colleges to join their English departments. And

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

then, in the midst of all 'the shouting and the tumult,' Hutton suddenly disappeared. And while his world was wondering where he might be, I had had the luck to stumble upon him on a flower-strewn hill above Lake Leman!

"The ice once broken, I had no intention of losing touch with Hutton and I saw a lot of him during the next few days. I felt a real thrill at finding myself in the company of a man who had arrived so early and with such resounding success. It is true, however, that when I was with him the echoes of that fanfare of public approval sounded, somehow, very far off. Perhaps it was because he received all mention of it with an indifference that savored of something deeper than modesty—a coldness that aroused both surprise and disquietude in one. I shan't forget in a hurry the rebuff my very sincere eulogy of 'Due East' met with, for example.

" 'It ought to get the Pulitzer prize —it's great!' I said enthusiastically. 'Greater even than "Dragon's Blood" had prepared the public to expect. It isn't often that an author hits the literary bull's-eye twice in succession. And the last mark was a severer test of your prowess than the first!'

"While I was speaking he looked at me almost offensively—as though suspecting I was making fun of him—mocking him. I fumbled mentally for the exact equivalent of the look he bent on me. He must have sensed my sincerity and my surprise at his attitude, however, for he suddenly laid an arm about my shoulder and said, half angrily, half contritely: 'My dear Penrose, spare me all that! I'm sick and tired of hearing about "Dragon's Blood" and "Due East"—especially "Due East"! We can surely find a thousand things more interesting to talk about than myself.'

"In spite of this embargo, we did find many mutual interests. We cruised about the lake, played golf together at Bex-les-Bains, and took long walks up the mountainside. Especially do I remember a golden afternoon we spent together in the Castle of Chillon, seated in one of the deep clefts in the solid masonry of Bonnivard's dungeon. Hutton looked about the vaulted chamber with its gloomy grandeur and tragic associations and shook his head.

" 'A magnificent but dreadful place!' he said with a wry smile.

" 'Not a bit of it!' I cried. 'We hold life too precious in these days, Hutton! Those old feudal overlords had the right idea. If a retainer served the dukes of Savoy well, he was given a castle and lands—a magnificent gesture, you'll allow! If he did them a real or fancied injury, they didn't invoke the slow, devious processes of the law—they simply chained him up here, in their private and personally conducted dungeon, or chucked him through that door into the lake—which happens to be "a thousand feet in depth" just here!' I got up and went over to the sinister opening in the stone floor from which worn, narrow steps led down to a padlocked door and eternity.

" 'Extermination became a fine art in these surroundings, Hutton. To take a last look from these walls at an ineffably lovely scene, to walk—perhaps with a friendly stone dragging at one's foot—down to the deep waters of this most beautiful lake and let them close over one's weary head! It's an exit fit for a prince!'

"Laughing at my tirade, I swept an arm toward the little flight of steps and looked at Hutton. To my astonishment

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he was intensely pale and his dark eyes were fixed on me with a curious, disquieting expression in them. Looking back on it now, I can see what a damn fool I was to have talked as I did. . . .

"A few days later Adela received a telegram from an elderly, globe-trotting aunt saying that the lady was ill in her hotel at Lucerne and would Adela come at once? The first thing I did after Adela had left me for the near-pneumonia victim, was to walk up to Hutton's châlet. Since that afternoon at Chillon I had felt a vague uneasiness about him—the subconscious necessity for keeping an eye on him.

"When I arrived I found him sitting in his little garden behind the châlet, alone and depressed. I was glad I had come. We had a long and pleasant conversation and I was just thinking of leaving when we heard the sound of a motor-car coming up the road. It stopped in front of the châlet and a moment later there was the tinkle of the door-bell and the young Swiss boy who did for Hutton appeared with a calling-card in his hand.

"Hutton took it from him and as he read the name upon it a look of the most intense surprise and happiness swept over his face. Almost at the same instant a young lady appeared on the threshold of the door, which the boy had left open behind him, and I saw Hutton rise precipitately and go forward to meet her.

" 'Clare!' he cried and stretched out both his hands.

"To my entire astonishment, I saw the girl put hers behind her back and look at Hutton with a stony contempt in her dark-blue eyes that stopped his advance effectually. His extended hands fell to his sides and he gazed in pale astonishment at the beautiful, angry girl. 'A spirit in my feet' informed me that I had better take my departure and leave them to themselves. I rose quickly, my chair scraping noisily on the gravel.

" 'Excuse me, Hutton—I must be going.' He turned to me in a dazed way.

" 'Wait a minute—I want you to meet an old friend—Miss Clare Whitney. Mr. Ross Penrose, Clare.'

"I bowed to the young lady. 'Old friends? Ah, then I am sure you have much to say to each other and I had best go!' I murmured with as ingratiating a smile as I could achieve on short notice. Miss Whitney turned her handsome eyes from Hutton and gave me a cool, detached stare.

" 'Thank you,' she said briefly. 'You are right—we have much to say to each other.'

" 'In that case—' I smiled again and, with a bow to the young lady who had so summarily dismissed me, passed through the garden to the *grande route* which led downward to the Villa Scarlatti.

"Both pride and discretion warned me not to look back, but, at a bend of the road, I couldn't resist the temptation. I saw Hutton still standing as I had left him, his head sunk on his breast, while the girl before him was speaking forcibly and rapidly. Suddenly I saw her hold out a letter to him, then fling herself into a chair and cover her eyes with her hands. Of course I was confoundedly intrigued by the whole thing and couldn't stifle sundry unworthy regrets that I had beat so hasty a retreat.

"An hour after my return I heard the sound of a motor-horn and caught a glimpse of the white face and stormy eyes of Miss Clare Whitney as she roll-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ed downward in her taxi past the Villa Scarlatti to the débarcadère.

"I sat here in the loggia for a long while that evening, thinking of poor Hutton alone, up at his gay, insouciant little châlet, where, all unexpectedly, Tragedy had intruded. I hoped he would telephone me. I would sleep better, I decided sentimentally, if I heard from him. But no word came then nor during the following morning. By afternoon I was so troubled by the whole mysterious business that I determined to walk it off. Instinctively I set out for the Castle of Chillon. . . .

"Looking back on it, I don't believe I was a bit surprised, on entering Bonnivard's dungeon, to see Hutton in the deep embrasure of the casement where we had sat a few days before. I realized at once that, subconsciously, I had expected to find him there, and I also realized that he expected me. It all seemed quite natural and he wasted no time in explanations. He just moved over to make room for me beside him.

" 'I know you must have thought all that business yesterday damn queer,' he began at once, turning a haggard face to mine. I started to lie, but he cut in mercilessly.

" 'Oh, yes, you did!—and naturally enough, too.' He twisted himself sideways and looked out at the rippling green water. 'I'd like to tell you about —myself—if you don't mind——'

"I wanted to protest. I felt utterly disinclined to hear anything, for my curiosity of the day before had entirely vanished.

" 'You don't owe *me* any explanations,' I murmured.

" 'Perhaps not,' he assented grimly, 'but I'd like to tell you, just the same. Good God!' he burst out, 'can't you see, man, I've *got* to talk to somebody?'

"I laid a soothing hand on his arm. 'Go ahead, Hutton—you know well enough I'm interested,' I said.

"He looked at me and I could see that for an instant his determination wavered. Then he took his courage in both hands and plunged into his story.

" 'I don't remember when the desire to write first got me. I suppose I had always meant to, and then teaching and newspaper work had begun to pall on me horribly. About five years ago—when I had saved up enough to subsist on for a while—I broke loose, gave up everything, and started in to write my first novel. The plot of a good story had come to me—just how I've never known. I suppose even the dullest mind flares up brightly *once!*' Hutton spoke with a bitterness impossible to describe. After a moment's silence he went on. 'The writing had seemed easy in perspective, but I soon found out that it was hard work, Penrose—sheer slavery! . . . Well, I kept at it doggedly, but no one was more surprised at the success of "Dragon's Blood" than I was. I could hardly believe my good fortune. I quickly accustomed myself to it, however, and to the social kowtowing and the luxury I soon allowed myself. I got hold of a good suite of rooms and a Jap valet and enjoyed myself hugely—for a while. Then I began to notice that my new friends were beginning to wonder about me. At first there were assumptions that I was deep in a new novel, then questions as to what I was doing, then hopes that something interesting would soon appear. It became torture after a time.

" 'Of course I saw that I had to get busy. Ever since finishing "Dragon's Blood" I had been casting about in my mind for the idea of another story that logically had to go my first book one

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

better. But to my dismay I hadn't been able to find a peg to hang a new conceit on. I had gone dry. I felt myself slipping backward—like a slow freight passed by the literary expresses with the new men aboard! The ghosts of ideas came and went in endless procession, but nothing arresting, nothing worth while. I worked feverishly at impossible plots, abandoning one after the other, as they proved valueless. I felt like a man in a nightmare. I wanted to run, to reach the goal, but I was bound, helpless—you know the awful sensation. At last I realized the bitter truth—that "Dragon's Blood" had just been a lucky fluke. I had shot my bolt. I was just one of the thousands of one-story men. . . .' "

As Penrose ceased speaking I heard André de Pillot utter a soft exclamation and saw him lean forward over the table, his eyes fixed intently on our host. After an instant's silence Penrose lit another cigarette and resumed Hutton's story.

" 'To make the matter infinitely more tragic to me,' went on Hutton, 'I had met "the only girl"! She was the daughter of the president of a Southern college that had invited me to join its faculty. It was at a garden party during commencement week that I first saw her. She—but what's the use of talking?—you've seen her, too.'

"I looked at Hutton in amazement. 'You mean——?'

" 'Yes—Clare Whitney! Almost before I had spoken to her I knew I was done for. The best of it was, she seemed to like me, too—she had read "Dragon's Blood" and admired it. She believed in me, Penrose! She cast a sort of spell over me—I felt sure of myself once more. I went back to New York determined to work out my literary salvation, filled with the hope of recapturing whatever it was that had made me write "Dragon's Blood." But it had escaped me—left me flat! The creative impulse in me was dead. You can imagine the despair that seized me! . . .

" 'And then *he* came. It had been one of my curses that I had seemed to inspire hero-worship, Penrose. I stirred the imagination of the younger men—God help 'em! And this one—Orr—Remsen Orr—was no exception. He wrote me—wanted the inestimable favor of a personal interview! Something in his note aroused both my interest and my curiosity. I told him to come, but I hardly expected him. It was a wild night—a driving, cold rain that froze as it fell. But he came—oh, yes, he came! You can't side-track Destiny by a sudden downpour and a spectacular drop in the mercury! . . .

" 'I found him a young fellow about my own age. Curiously enough he was an alumnus of the Southern college where I had met Clare Whitney. He had known her slightly during his college days, he said, and added that he had heard that she had just gone down to Mexico to visit friends. . . . We talked for two hours and he told me the story of his life. He was absolutely alone in the world, it seemed, and I was the only human being to whom he had confided his literary ambitions and his year's hard work on his novel. His elation over the secret between us was the most delicate compliment I had ever had paid me. . . .

" 'When Orr got up to go—he was motoring out to the little Westchester place he owned—he left me the manuscript of his book. What he had really come for was to ask me to accept the dedication. But I was to read it first. If I liked it—deemed it not unworthy!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

—think of it, Penrose!' As Hutton said that he looked at me with a really agonized expression and stopped speaking.

" 'Go on, Hutton,' I urged. I wanted to get it over with.

" 'Well,' he recommenced, 'I tried to make Orr stay with me—it was such a fearful night. But he declined. I've always been glad I begged him to stay—that I really did try to avert fate. It makes what happened a little less despicable, perhaps. . . .'

"Hutton turned his ravaged face to me, as though appealing dumbly, in advance, to my leniency; then hurried on.

" 'It was late when Orr left me, and I tossed the manuscript on my table meaning to read it the next day. But I couldn't resist the pull of that flat package. A bitter curiosity possessed me. I sat down, cut the string, and the typed sheets fluttered out to me. I began to read. . . . The storm was over and daylight was whitening my window-panes when I turned the last pages of "Due East." '

" ' "Due East"?' I stammered. Hutton raised his tragic eyes to mine.

" 'Don't pretend you haven't understood!' he said angrily. I stared at him in bewilderment.

" 'But how—' I began.

" 'This is "how," ' he cut in savagely. 'I went to bed and slept until noon. When I woke up my Jap brought me my breakfast and the morning paper. From the front page there leaped at me the account of Orr's death. His car had skidded on the Katonah road, overturned, and he had been catapulted, head foremost, against a telegraph-pole. . . . It wasn't until the next day that I began to wonder what I was to do with the manuscript he had left with me. He had told me that he hadn't yet approached any publisher about it and there wasn't a soul to go to that I knew of. From what he had said I felt sure that he hadn't even a lawyer or business agent. . . .' Hutton waited a moment. 'I swear I would have given up the manuscript if there had been any one to give it to. You believe me, don't you?' he burst out fiercely; then looked away. 'No—of course you don't!' he said bitterly, and added: 'And you're dead right not to. I suppose I never meant to do a thing about it. I fooled myself from the start—kept telling myself that morally it was mine. Hadn't he dedicated it to me? Hadn't he said that my work had inspired him to write it?—that if it hadn't been for me "Due East" would never have been penned? You know the sort of thing one tells oneself to justify some scoundrelly action. . . . And then there was the tempting certainty that not a soul knew about the book. . . . I was absolutely safe . . . and he was dead—it couldn't do him any harm. I almost persuaded myself that he would *want* me to father the book—I'd got that low!

" 'But perhaps I would have done something about it had it not been for the thought of Clare Whitney. With "Due East" success was certain, overwhelming. . . . I couldn't give up that chance! . . . I waited three months—oh, I was damn careful! But I felt sure that if anybody had known about the manuscript they'd have shown up by that time. . . . Then I went to my publishers. . . .

" 'Well, you know what happened. One edition after another sold out. Rollins's dramatization of it was a huge success—the money's been pouring in. . . . In the midst of all the hubbub I slipped away. I was too great a coward and knave to confess that I had duped the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

public, but, at least, it sickened me to accept its applause any longer. So I came over here to be alone and I kept to myself, as I had sworn to do, until the other evening when you called me up. You caught me in a bad moment—an irresistible need to get away from myself—to be with decent people once more—sent me to you.'

"He broke off and, leaning from the casement, stared miserably down at the deep water with the flickering sunlight on it. I tell you, de Pillot, my heart ached for him," said Penrose.

"I am sure of it, monsieur," replied the Frenchman courteously, but in what struck me as a curiously unsympathetic voice. Penrose did not seem to notice it, however, and went on after a pause.

" 'And what did Miss Whitney say when you went to her?' I asked Hutton.

" 'I never went to her,' he replied slowly. 'She had written me on the publication of "Due East"—a wonderful letter. When I read it I knew that the damnable lack of imagination which had mocked my attempts at creative work had failed me once more. I hadn't realized until then just how completely I had ruined every chance I had had—how impossible it would be for me ever to go to her again.'

" 'But she came to you—' I hazarded, somewhat sardonically.

"Hutton threw up his head. 'Ah, not as you think!' he said quickly. 'She came because she had found me out! She came with Orr's letter in her hand! The one thing I hadn't had the wit to think of had happened. I had taken it for granted that Orr's relations with Clare had been as casual as he intended I should think them. But from what she told me yesterday I guessed, easily enough, that he had adored her—that she had been his Egeria since his college days. . . . When he left me that night he had been so elated by my talk with him that he suddenly decided to break his silence and tell her of his ambitions and his work. He stopped at his club before leaving town and wrote her a long letter telling her everything. She was the one person in the world, besides myself, to whom he could open his heart. . . . He sent the letter to Mexico City. It missed her—she had left for Cuernavaca. It missed her again and by some inexplicable mischance found its way to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec where it lay, unclaimed for months, in the sun-blistered little post-office of Minatitlan. In the course of time it was unearthed by the postmaster, who, after a leisurely wait, sent it back to the American Embassy in Mexico City. Ultimately it was forwarded to her home address, but by that time she had left for Europe. It reached her two days ago at Lucerne. She had met your wife there—they were stopping at the same hotel—and Mrs. Penrose mentioned my name. . . . I suppose it's what is called 'the long arm of coincidence, eh, Penrose?' His dreary voice trailed off into inarticulateness, expired.

" 'And you?—what are you going to do?' I ventured at last.

" 'Oh, there is only one thing for me to do—disappear.'

"Disappear? I echoed stupidly.

" 'Yes. It's easy enough, isn't it? You yourself have indicated one pleasant and picturesque way of—disappearing,' he said, almost gaily, and waved a hand toward the little flight of stone steps.

"I looked at my watch and rose. 'I must do a little disappearing myself.' I spoke unconcernedly, for I wasn't

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thinking much of what Hutton was saying. I wasn't worrying about him because, fool that I was, I utterly misjudged him. I didn't think he was the kind to commit suicide—hadn't the 'guts,' I'd have said in my blind egoism. No, I wasn't thinking of poor Hutton. I was thinking of myself and the shock of bitter disillusionment his confession had brought me. All that I wanted at the moment was to get out in the air and sunshine. But the next morning, when his servant at the châlet sent out an alarm and we found his hat and coat near the sinister opening in the dungeon floor, I realized that I had been a damn fool again and a rotter to leave him there, alone with his bitter thoughts, his tragic failure—that I had helped to push him over the edge of life!"

Penrose stopped speaking. He lifted his head and looked at de Pillot and myself.

"And now, gentlemen, you see why I can't help blaming myself," he half-whispered.

For an instant there was a deep silence. Adela's face was white and troubled. I realized that I was breathing quickly and that a damp sweat lay on my forehead. As for de Pillot he sat quietly smoking for a long moment. Then, to my surprise, he laid down his cigarette, fumbled an instant in an inside pocket, and pulled out a pencil and an old letter. He leaned across the table and began to sketch rapidly on the blank side of the envelope. Suddenly he pushed the paper over to Penrose.

"Is that your man?"

Penrose picked up the envelope with the tips of his fingers and stared in astonishment at the sketch.

"Yes—where'd *you* know him?"

"In Mexico—met him there six months ago—" Adela gave a startled cry and looked at her husband.

"It was in the patio of the Jardin Hotel at Minatitlan. I'd been sent there on some government business. He told me the whole affair—without names and places, of course. He said to me, as he had said to you, that 'by God, he had to have some one to talk to!' He was a little drunk. I fancy he is often that way—now. I guessed he was your man almost as soon as you began your story."

Penrose was not listening. He was staring at the Frenchman, a strange expression in his eyes.

"Six months ago?—you say six months ago? Then he didn't——"

"No," interrupted de Pillot cheerfully, "he didn't. You were right—he had not the 'guts,' as you say." He picked up his cigarette. "I am happy to be the bearer of news which must afford you great relief, monsieur, does it not?"

To my surprise, Penrose suddenly flung off his wife's arm and, getting to his feet precipitately, faced de Pillot.

"No, by God, it doesn't!" he cried. "You've taken from me the only consolation I've had in all this miserable business—the belief that I had misjudged Hutton—that, in spite of everything, there was both courage and nobility in him! I told myself that his sin was expiated, since he had been capable of making so magnificent a gesture of atonement!—that he had chosen an exit fit for a prince! And now—now——!"

Penrose's voice broke, stopped. Suddenly he turned his back upon us and, leaning against a pillar of the loggia, stared up silently, a passion of regret in his lifted eyes, at the little brown châlet.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hacking New York

BY ROBERT HAZARD

The taxi racket and one of its benevolent autocrats, a driver's view of those who ride, and the philosophy of companionate cars.

II

HACKMEN

THERE are all kinds of people driving hacks in New York. There are a lot of gunmen, gorillas, etc., who serve a district leader at election-time and get a certain amount of protection in turn, and who drive taxicabs as a convenient side-line. Most of them are to be found on what are called closed lines; that is, some places where taxicabs stand in line for business at a designated hack-stand, a tough gang will get together and hold the line for themselves and keep outsiders out.

At the other extreme there is a close relative of the late Elbert Hubbard who has been hacking in New York ever since automobiles came in, and he can tell some very good stories if you happen to meet him in one of the Coffee Pots about three o'clock in the morning.

Then there is George Mast. His people have followed the sea for generations. According to his story, he was a captain in the Merchant Marine before the war. During the war he was enrolled in the naval reserve. He had a couple of supply-ships blown out from under him, one right after the other, just off New York Harbor. After the war he was placed in command of a destroyer. One day he received orders by wireless to call in at Bermuda and pick up ten cases of special ammunition. He thought they were funny-looking ammunition-cases, but there was nothing to do but obey orders. When he got into New York Harbor the prohibition officers boarded the ship at quarantine, seized the ten cases of special ammunition, which proved to be a fine assortment of wines and liqueurs from France. The orders apparently were faked by some one.

George was kept out of jail but was retired from the service on part-pay pending an investigation. The papers in the case were supposed to have been forwarded to Washington. The case was never officially investigated.

George is, as he describes himself, "fair, fat, and forty," but he manages to get by driving a taxi, as his part-pay is hardly enough to support his family.

He had to report occasionally to the Naval Reserve office then at Ellis Island. He used to drive the cab down to South Ferry, park the car and put his old tin hack badge in his pocket. The Reserve kept a launch there to ferry people over to the offices. The sailors would remember Mast, salute and man the boat to take him to the Island and for the moment he would be an officer again. Then he would return, put on the badge and go back to hacking.

SOLD THE FORD

I finally decided that I had better sell my Ford taxi and buy a new one, but I thought it a good idea to work for other

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people and try out the various makes of cars at somebody else's expense before I made a decision as to what to get.

A well-known racketeer, whom we will call Harry, had recently bought five hundred Yellow cabs and had obtained the concession at Grand Central and Penn Station. I went over to their garage on 49th Street and applied for a job. I was sent out with another applicant and a mechanic for a tryout. While I had driven plenty of gear-shift cars years before, I had been driving that one Ford for so long that I had gotten so it was a part of me, like my own hands and feet. I didn't have to think about anything any more. I just thought "stop" and I stopped; I thought "start" and I started. When I took the wheel on the Yellow cab, I was all at sea. I shoved the clutch in expecting the car to go ahead in low. Nothing happened. Then I had to think about shifting gears. When I wanted to give it more gas, I would start scratching around under the steering-wheel for the throttle, and there wasn't any. Then it would occur to me that I had to step on it. So I didn't make a very good showing. The other fellow, however, made out all right, as he had been driving a Shaw previously.

We all went back to the employment office, and the mechanic told the employment-office man something in private and went out. Then the employment manager took down my name and address, license numbers, etc., and gave me a badge, and I was all set to go to work, and he told me to report at the 25th Street garage. Then he turned to the other fellow and said: "I am afraid you haven't had enough experience; you had better go to work for somebody else for a while and then come back."

I saw the employment manager had got us mixed. When the other fellow started in to explain that he had been driving a Yellow right along and knew all about them, the employment manager caught on he had made a mistake, but he didn't want to admit it, so I backed on out the door. I knew the other fellow could come back the next day and get a job if he wanted to, and I also knew that with a few hours' practice I would be perfectly familiar with the Yellow.

WORKING FOR HARRY

I reported at the 25th Street garage that evening ready to go to work on the night-line. It was an interesting bunch of men waiting for the cars to come in.

Harry had been brought up in Hell's Kitchen and had been a taxi-driver, playing the closed lines on the waterfront. When prohibition came along, he got into the bootlegging game and made rapid strides. Possibly his success was due to the fact that he already knew the best of the gunmen and gorillas in New York that were necessary to the business. When he was at the high tide of his success, he bought five hundred Yellow cabs at a crack, got concessions at Grand Central and Penn Station and put all the gorillas in Hell's Kitchen to work driving them. When a West Side gunman got out of Sing Sing, Harry was there to meet him and gave him a job. Most of the drivers were gorillas. The mechanics were gorillas. The checkers were gorillas. The garage superintendent was an ex-heavy-weight prize-fighter of considerable ability. Even the bookkeepers in his office on Times Square were gorillas.

I went very carefully about breaking in on the job. Whenever any one spoke, it had the effect of a threat. One of the drivers asked the superintendent if his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

car hadn't come in yet, and the superintendent said: "How long have you been working around here? Did you ever get a poke in the nose?" I gave my name and waited quietly until my name was called. I got on the car and got out of the garage very carefully.

I made out very well that night and pulled in about two o'clock in the morning, and discovered that we were expected to line up the cars in a certain way outside to drive into the garage. A man at the door would holler out, "All right there," when there was room for another cab to come in.

When you got inside you took gasoline. Then some one said, "Pull up," as though it would be your last moment if you didn't. You then pulled up to the wash-stand and somebody said "Stop." Then a man came around with a box with coins in it which he shook and said: "Put something in the kitty—coffee money for the boys." Nobody dared refuse.

The second night I took a chance and said, "I don't think you boys ought to drink so much coffee; it's bad for your health," and didn't put anything in the kitty. Nothing happened; I think probably because they were so surprised they didn't know what to make of it.

That same night I reported that the rear end didn't sound quite right, for, having driven my own cab, I knew it was better to take care of those things first rather than last. I made the report to the head mechanic. He said: "What? What did you say?" I thought my last moment had come. But I stuck to it, so he jacked the rear end up and gave it a tryout, and great was my relief when he did hear something wrong in it.

One night the superintendent knocked five drivers cold, one right after another, for not pulling up and stopping their cars just to suit him.

There were certain great advantages in working for Harry. For one thing he squashed all summonses. If you got a summons for anything, you turned it into the office and paid no more attention to it. He had to cut that out after a while for his own protection, because the drivers got to going so wild they smashed up all the cars. Along about two o'clock in the morning they used to come west on 49th Street and on 25th Street to the two garages in a more or less steady stream, and crossed Ninth and Tenth Avenues so recklessly that it became customary for the street-car motormen on those avenues to stop at 49th Street and 25th Street while the conductor went ahead to see if the coast was clear.

Now there were lots of closed lines at that time, a closed line being a hackstand held down by a bunch of good fighters who beat up any driver who dares to get a call in that immediate neighborhood. But Harry kept a big Packard car, loaded full of gorillas, standing by the Pennsylvania Hotel, and if a driver got beat up for chiselling a call on any one of those closed lines, he could telephone the office. I was down at South Ferry once when one of his drivers got beat up. In a little while the big Packard appeared. Its occupants came down and each one hired a cab. Then they all drove up somewhere on Greenwich Street. The passengers got out, and from then on you couldn't hear anything but crack, bang, sock. There wasn't anybody able to work the South Ferry line for several days.

After a few of these events, word got passed around and his drivers went un-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

molested although the buckers who used to work the West Shore Ferry line dared to try cutting tires on his cabs when they worked there. His gorillas came down one night and cleaned them up so thoroughly that their cars were left standing there all the next day. Even their friends were afraid to come down and drive their cars away.

There had been a particularly tough bunch in a line on West 4th Street. One of Harry's drivers picked up a call near there one night, and one of the members of the line threatened him. Harry's man stepped down off his cab and the other fellow hit him. Harry's man knocked the bucker down, and just then a cop came up and was going to put Harry's driver under arrest for assault. The rest of the line rushed up then and told the cop that it was only their own man's fault, that he started it; and they gave their own member warning that if he ever slugged Harry's drivers around there, he could get the hell off the line.

THE BENEVOLENT AUTOCRAT

I went up to the office the next week to get my pay. Another driver there said: "Say, Harry, I want to borrow fifteen dollars."

Harry said: "What do you want with fifteen dollars?"

"I want to get a dress for the wife."

Harry said, "Go on. How can you get a dress for the wife with fifteen dollars?" and pushed him in the face.

The driver said: "Well, I got twenty-five and with fifteen more I can get her a decent dress."

Harry called out to the cashier: "Give him fifteen dollars."

I found that Harry took care of the families of many of the men who were taken sick, sent their sick children to the country, paid their doctor bills. On the other hand, if a driver was caught riding stick up (carrying a passenger with the flag up so the metre wouldn't register the fare), the gorillas would pick him up at night and give him the finest shellacking you ever saw.

In spite of all Harry's generosity and all the beatings that were handed out, the drivers kept on riding stick up. I think they cheated him more than any other cab-owner in town.

One driver had been sick a couple of months and his family had been sick. Harry had supported them, sent them all to the country, kept the family there a long time. And after all that, they got him riding stick up one night. When the gorillas got through with him, he was a sight to behold.

I rode stick up on him myself, made a flat rate to the Bronx one night. I got up to 125th Street when I spotted Harry and the gorillas in the big Packard. I put the flag down real quick and they pulled up along side of me. He says: "Got a good call?"

I said: "Yeah, Bronx."

One of the gorillas got out and looked over the seals on the clock, but he didn't look to see what the clock registered. If he had seen there was only twenty cents on it, my goose would have been cooked.

When he had been running the cabs a year he gave a dinner, for all drivers who had been with him over ten months, at the Pennsylvania Hotel, gave them all gold badges, took them up to the Follies in taxicabs. Under influence of the excitement of the occasion the gorillas socked all the buckers playing the big Pennsylvania Hotel line and put Harry's cabs on the line in their place.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One of the drivers was held up one night by five men, who got about thirty-five dollars off of him and took the cab. He went up to the office and told Harry about it, described the men. Harry made good the money he had lost and told him not to say anything to the police about it.

In the meantime the five men had had an accident with the car, and the police had picked them up, found the driver had no hack license, and knew the car was stolen. The police tried to get Harry and the driver to appear against the five, but he refused, so the police had to turn them loose, which might seem very generous, but the gorillas picked them up about as soon as they got out and beat hell out of them.

FIRED

Harry got up a mutual benefit association for the drivers with dues of fifty cents a week to provide medical service, etc., for the men. We weren't asked to join; the fifty cents was taken out of our pay; so I stopped in at the office and said: "Harry, I'm not interested in this benefit association. I already have my own doctor and own dentist and I would rather not pay the fifty cents a week."

"Well," he said, "that's all right if you don't want it. We'll take your name off the list." Then he said: "Well, I don't know. If we let you out, why then they will all back out. I guess we'll have to let you go, Hazard."

So I said: "Well, all right."

I went over to the cashier to draw my pay in full. After a few minutes Harry came over and said: "Are you married, Hazard?"

"Yes."

"You got any children?"

"Yes, I got one."

He looked very upset, turned to go away, came back again and said: "I'm sorry, Hazard, but I can't help it."

THE MOGUL CHECKERS

In the meantime the Mogul Checker Taxicab Manufacturing Company had sold a lot of taxicabs in New York and they were taking the business away from everybody else. It seemed to me that it would only be a matter of time until there would be so many of them on the streets that they would be cutting each other's throats, or some other cab manufacturer would come out with a new cab, dolled up to catch the public's fickle fancy, and kill them off. These cars sold for three thousand dollars, which was about twice what they were worth from a mechanical standpoint, so I thought it would be better to continue to work for somebody else. I got a job driving for a very unfortunate person who had invested in about sixty Mogul Checkers. We all worked on a percentage basis; that is, the driver got 35 per cent of what the clock registered. Now, it was very easy to make a bargain with a passenger and leave the flag up and keep it up. The only question was how much to turn in to keep from getting fired, so I made it my business to ask the other drivers how much they booked, and found that on the night-line, which I was working, they varied from sixty to a hundred and fifty dollars a week. I noticed the boss kept letting out the tail-enders and trying out new men, but the men who turned in better than seventy-five a week were never reached in this process. I was a pretty fair hackman and could have turned in a hundred and twenty, but I thought "Why make the boss a present of forty-five dollars a week?" so I kept close track of it and turned in between seventy-five and eighty dollars. I made cracking good

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

money all that year. I saved on an average of two hundred dollars a month above all living expenses.

THE ADDICT

I picked up a couple one night, and when I got them to their destination they handed me the money but hesitated about getting out. They were rather poor-looking people, about thirty, apparently husband and wife. Then the man stammered a bit and asked me if I knew where a person could go to take the drug cure. I told him I didn't know but I understood the city ran a kind of place where they put people through a cure. He went on to explain he had got started taking drugs, and the woman chipped in and helped along. I finally got it clear that he had become addicted to drugs through taking stuff for insomnia and now was in a pretty bad way, and it took so much to keep him going, he couldn't make both ends meet any more, and he wanted to get over it some way. I suggested the best thing to do would be to call up the Board of Health and they ought to give him the information. They wanted to know whether, if they would hire me the next morning, I wouldn't attend to it for them, so I said I would.

I called and got the man the next morning. His wife had gone to work apparently. The man looked to be in very bad shape. He said he had been off the stuff for a day and wasn't going to buy any more. I called up the Board of Health. Some girl answered the phone and I told her I wanted to find out about getting a man sent to the city institution for drug addicts. She said: "You will have to come down and see the health commissioner."

I drove down to the Health Department building near City Hall, left the man in the car, went up to the office and told the girl at the desk my business. She told me to sit down and wait; she would tell the commissioner. I sat down and waited and waited. After about an hour the commissioner came out. A woman who had come in in the meantime rushed up and started talking to him. I thought: "Well, I will wait until she gets through instead of raising a disturbance. By and by she got through and the commissioner turned and started to go back into his office. I jumped up and said: "Hey, do you realize I have been waiting over an hour to talk to you?"

"Well, why don't you say what you want?"

So I told him the story.

"Why, we have nothing to do with that business," he explained. "You will have to go see the Board of Narcotic Control."

"Where can I find them?" I asked.

"The girl will look up their address for you."

The girl went through some papers in her desk and told me to go to 148 Bowery, I think. I drove over to the Bowery, went up to a dingy office with a lot of benches around for people to sit on, and a shabby old man at the desk. I told him the story.

He said: "You will have to wait until Mrs. —— comes in. She attends to that. Sit down. She will be in pretty soon."

I was getting worried about the poor devil in the cab. He looked pretty bad. I was afraid he might pass out on me, so I went down, helped him up the steps, put him on a bench so I could have him where I could watch him.

We waited and we waited and we waited.

Finally I went up to the desk again and said: "What's the idea? When is

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this woman going to get in, anyway?"

"Well, I can't make her come in. You will have to be patient. You should realize you are getting all of this service for nothing and appreciate it."

"Yes, and it seems to be worth it."

I sat down and we waited. Finally the woman came in and, after fussing around at her desk for fifteen or twenty minutes, she asked me what I wanted and I told her the story.

She got out a blank and said: "Now, what's your name?"

I told her.

"How long have you been addicted?"

I explained courteously I wasn't addicted.

She continued: "How many members of your family are addicted?"

"My family hasn't got anything to do with it. This fellow wants to take the cure and I want to get him through it."

She said: "Well, you will have to give me all the facts if we are going to do anything for you. We want to do all we can for you but we must know the facts."

I said: "If you want to take down this man's name and have him committed, all right. If you don't, say so."

She grumbled a little bit and wrote the man's name and address down. Then she wanted to know how many members of his family were addicted. I told her I didn't know and I didn't care. Then she went on to explain about how whole families get to taking the stuff, it's so terrible, and so on and so on, what a time they have helping them.

Finally I asked: "Well, what do you do next?"

She looked at her watch and looked at the calendar and said: "It's too late for us to do anything to-day, but maybe if you go up to the other office on 125th Street they will be able to take care of you. You had better go up to see them. I don't think I will be able to do anything for you." She gave me the address on 125th Street.

I lugged the poor devil back to the cab, and we rolled up to 125th Street. I left him in the cab and went up-stairs, told the woman in charge there I had a man I wanted to have committed as a drug addict.

She got out a blank and put down my name and address. I told her I didn't enter into it; the other fellow wanted to be committed. But she insisted on taking it down.

"How long have you been addicted?" she asked.

I told her I wasn't addicted. I had a fellow out in the cab I wanted to get committed.

Finally she put down his name and address. Then she said: "How many other members of your family are addicted to the use of narcotics?"

I explained over again I wasn't addicted, my family had nothing to do with it, and I knew nothing about the other fellow's family.

She said: "Now, are you sure you are not taking it yourself?"

I said: "Well, for God's sake, let's get some action. That poor devil's likely to pass out on me down there."

"Well, we can't do anything about it to-day."

"Can't you send him to a hospital or something?" I asked.

"No," she explained, "the hospitals won't accept anything but ambulance cases, and he isn't an ambulance case as long as he is in a taxicab. No," she continued, "all you can do is to take him down to the other office on the Bowery at nine o'clock Thursday morning. That's the office for receiving."

"Well," I said, "from the way it looks

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to me this guy will be dead before that time."

"Then you had better get him some of the stuff to tide him over until Thursday morning.

"Where can I get some of it?"

She opened her mouth to answer, then changed her mind. Finally she said: "Well, you ought to be able to get some of it. There are plenty of places."

I went down to see how the passenger was getting along, and he was about gone. He had been throwing up green stuff and had straightened out as stiff as a board in the cab. I couldn't bend his arms or his legs. His face had turned a kind of a yellowish green. I managed to get out of him where we could get some of the stuff, so I drove over there, got a small bottle of it for five bucks. He took a small shot and commenced to feel better right away, so I took him home and arranged to call for him Thursday morning.

When I got over there for him Thursday morning he was in pretty good shape. The supply had lasted him. I took him down to the Bowery. We waited from nine until about quarter past ten, and the woman hadn't showed up yet. Finally she came in in a great rush and said: "Oh, you are here. Well, now let's see. I have a great deal to attend to to-day. I don't believe I will be able to go over with you, but you can go over there yourself. It's 301 Mott Street, and they will tell you where you go there."

I felt right at home then because 301 Mott Street is the Traffic Court where I have been so often and spent so much good jack.

I drove right over there and asked one of the cops where you go to get a drug addict committed. He gave me the number of the room, and, by jinks! it was the same old room where I had been three or four times previously, where I with a number of others had pleaded guilty and were fined in a bunch.

We went into the room and I said to the clerk: "I have been sent here by the Board of Narcotic Control. I have a man here to take the drug-cure. The Board of Narcotic Control told me ——"

"We don't care anything about that," he interrupted. "All you got to do is give his name. Anybody can come in here and be committed to take the cure that wants to."

That's all there was to it. The man signed his name. The clerk took it into the judge and he signed it. And we were through.

THE DRUNKEN COP

A cop hailed me in Greenwich Village. He had a drunk with him who, he told me, was a cop too, and he wanted me to take him over to some place on Degraw Street, Brooklyn, and that he was all right.

The fellow looked rather like a cop, but I didn't like the looks of it; still, I didn't see any way to get out of it, so I took him. When I got over there he climbed out of the cab in kind of a dazed condition and started walking off without offering to pay the fare, so I walked after him and told him he hadn't paid the fare yet. He opened his coat showing a gun in a yellow holster at his hip, put his hand on it and said: "This is all the fare you'll get."

I went back to the cab and started following him with the cab. When he saw I was following him, he stepped out into the middle of the street and drew the gun. I leaned over in the seat so as to be protected by the cowl and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drove the car right at him. He jumped out of the way, but I caught him a glancing blow with the mud-guard and knocked him over and he dropped the gun. I stopped as quickly as possible and backed up to try and get the gun, but he got up and got the gun before I could make it, but I managed to bump him with the rear of the car again. Then he made a run to try to jump on the running-board, but I stepped on the gas fast enough so that he lost his hold and fell again. He got up and started going the other way, so I backed the car, following him that way, which enabled me to use the back part of the car as a shield. When he'd stop and come at me, I'd go into low and shoot ahead a ways. We manœuvred around, up one street and down another for quite a while. Several men came out and advised me to let that guy alone, they knew him, and the best thing I could do was to forget it; but I was working for a company then, and if I didn't get it I would have to pay it out of my own pocket.

He tried grabbing another taxi, but the other drivers saw the situation and got away from him. Then he got a street-car and followed it a ways. Then he gave that up and tried it on foot again. All of this time I had been looking for a cop, but none had showed up. Then I came in sight of a station-house in that precinct, so I thought I would take the chance of losing him, shoot over there and get a cop.

I went in and told the sergeant about it, giving him the name that the cop had addressed him by and the fact that he carried a gun practically unconcealed. The sergeant said: "What do you expect us to do about it?"

I said: "Well, if you don't know what to do about it, I guess that settles it. So long."

He said: "Hold on there now; hold on. Who'd you say this fellow is?"

Again I gave him the name that I had heard the cop address him by and the fact that he carried a gun practically unconcealed.

"Well," he said, "now that's different. I didn't understand before he is supposed to be a cop. I don't think he could have been a cop. That's more reason for us to get after him. There's a lot of guys running around with fake badges. We got a guy the other day with a fake patrolman's badge and a fake captain's badge. You'd better go in and see one of the detectives. There's no use to put a patrolman on this. One of the detectives will bring him in."

I went into the detectives' room and told one of them about it. He had to make out a typewritten report on it. While I was talking to him, I overheard two of the others talking. One said: "I hear there was a guy got bumped off over at Murphy's yesterday. Tough luck."

The other one said: "Yeh, that's just the way it goes. I've been frisking everybody in that place day in and day out, night in and night out, and just when I get a day off something has to happen."

Well, with the report finally made out, one of the detectives went out with me to see if we could find the bird, but after a lot of walking around he decided to give it up. So I never got that two dollars and ten cents.

THE SCOLD

I picked up a woman at the corner of Fordham Road and Webster. She wanted to go to 180th Street and Van Nest Avenue. The cop was holding the traffic on Fordham Road.

She said: "Why don't you go ahead?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I don't want to sit here all day. I'm in a hurry."

"I can't. The cop is holding the traffic."

"How's that? There's fifteen cents on the clock already."

"That's the way it works."

"Well, I won't pay it."

"You'll have to."

"Well, I'll get out."

"All right, go ahead, but you'll have to pay me the fifteen cents."

"I'll call an officer," she threatened.

"Fine. That just suits me. There's one right there," and I pointed to one standing about fifteen feet away.

By that time traffic was moving on Fordham Road and she said: "Why don't you go ahead? What's the matter with you? I never saw such a taxi-driver."

We had gone about two blocks when she said: "You're going the wrong way. Don't you know where you are going?"

I slowed up. "How do you want to go?"

"Go ahead. Go ahead. Didn't I tell you I'm in a hurry?"

Two blocks farther on she almost screamed: "You're going the wrong way. You're trying to run up a big bill on the clock. I won't pay it."

I put on the brake and said again: "Well, how do you want to go?"

She shouted: "Go ahead, go ahead, I'm in a hurry."

I stepped on the gas again.

She continued: "If you don't know where it is, why didn't you say so?"

"I know where it is." There is hardly any choice as to how to get there and I was going the shortest way and I knew that she must know it.

"How much is the fare going to be?" she asked.

"Oh, about four dollars."

She almost choked. "You're going the wrong way. It shouldn't be more than sixty-five cents."

"Well, I wish you would tell me how you want to go. The more there is on the clock, the more I collect."

"Go on, go on. My people are waiting for me."

We kept this up all the way there.

I had sixty-five cents on the clock and she said: "I'm not going to pay you more than fifty cents. That's all it should be."

"You'll have to pay what's on the clock, and, furthermore, the clock is still running and it will register another nickel pretty soon and you'll have to pay that too."

She finally handed me a dollar and said: "I'm not going to give you any tip."

"That's old stuff. I knew that long ago. It's tip enough to get rid of you."

"You're the worst taxi-driver I ever saw. If it weren't that my people are waiting for me, I wouldn't have ridden in your old cab."

"Don't worry, they can live without you. It's a wonder to me they didn't murder you long ago."

She took a deep breath and was just starting in all over again when I went into low and let the clutch in.

POCKETBOOKS

I am always finding women's pocketbooks in the cab. I brought so many pocketbooks home to my little daughter that she doesn't know what to do with them all. One time I had a couple of cars, so that I had drivers working for me, and they started bringing home pocketbooks to my little girl. We had pocketbooks all over the place.

It's funny they all contained about the same things. The description of one

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about fits them all: from five to thirty cents; a handkerchief; some sticks of chewing-gum with some portions of sticks, the labels carefully folded over the ends; a mirror; lip-stick; rouge; powder-puff; a rosary; and a small bottle of bichloride-of-mercury tablets. One contained a Christmas list:

Uncle Tom—Necktie.
Father—Socks.
Cousin Jim—Necktie.
Ben—Necktie.
Grandpa—Socks.
Mother—Handkerchiefs.
Aunt Lilly—Handkerchiefs.
Mary—Stockings.
Gene—Stockings.

And one contained a list of words, followed by definitions:

Exquisite—Expensive.
Refined— ——.
Hectic—A disease.
Virgin—Young.
Control—When you are experienced.
Selfish—When an old man takes you to a matinée.

Now, I don't know that all women's pocketbooks are like this, but I do know that this is the kind that is left in taxicabs.

ERRORS

I picked up an old fellow the other day who makes an interesting case for those who care for Freud's theory as to errors and for those who are thoroughly acquainted with down-town New York.

He hailed me at Seventh and Greenwich Avenues. He was a middle-aged gentleman, dressed in the style of old, old New York—black cutaway coat, striped trousers, vest with white piping around the neck, a black derby that came near being a high hat. He was just the least bit shabby, and timid.

He said: "Now, I want you to take me to that court on Lafayette Street. Is there a court at No. 57 Lafayette?"

"I don't know. The Criminal Court Building is near there."

"Well, take me down there. It's on Lafayette between Lexington Avenue and 3d Street."

"Hold on," I said. "There isn't any such place."

"Well, it's somewhere in that neighborhood. Maybe it's 3d Street between Irving Place and Lexington Avenue."

My head started to spin. "But there isn't any such place."

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you. We'll go over and inquire at that court on Jefferson Street and Eighth Avenue."

"Wait a minute. That's another one that doesn't exist."

"Why, yes. You must know that place, that big court building there at 6th Street and Tenth Avenue."

"Oh, you must mean Jefferson Market Court, right down here."

"Yes, that's it," he said, but he looked very downhearted, and added: "Greenwich Street and Tenth Avenue."

"All right," I said, and I drove him to Jefferson Market Court, down to the little back door on 10th Street. In a few minutes he came out again, all smiles and bright as a daisy. "I've got it all straight now. I've got it all straight. It's No. 57 Irving Place, right between 3d Street and Lafayette."

"Hold on. I'll go in and ask him myself." As I started in, he trotted along behind me and said: "Maybe it's—" But I didn't give him a chance to give me any more.

To the desk sergeant I said: "Say, Jack, where does this bird want to go?"

He said: "Take him up to the Domestic Relations Court, 57th Street between Third and Lexington."

"Righto."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I started back for the cab, with the old man still trotting along behind me. He said: "Oh, you know him."

"Sure."

I took the old man up to the Domestic Relations Court. He didn't seem to be a bit pleased; rather depressed, if anything. There was eighty cents on the clock. He handed me a dollar, waited for the twenty cents change, and walked off with it.

COMPANIONATE CARS

I have been reading this stuff by Ben Lindsay about sex. I really can't see anything more complicated about the sex business than about the business of buying an automobile.

I like a Packard. I had one that I drove about two hundred and sixty-eight thousand miles. I took care of it, and it never failed me. If I had to get out of a tight place, I could step on the gas, and I knew just what she would do, and she always did it. Owning that Packard to me meant being sure of having the car I liked best, having the exclusive use of it, being sure that no irresponsible person who had no stake in it would put it out of order, being able to take care of it and know that somebody else wouldn't bang it all up. Now if that old Packard could talk I don't imagine that it would resent the fact that I thought I owned it, because it would realize that in so far as I owned it, it also owned me, and I think it would have been rather proud of the fact that it was worth owning.

People who have a lot of money don't have to worry so much about buying a car. If they don't like the first one, they can get a second one; but for ordinary folks it is different.

Maybe a man would like to have a Buick. He feels he would be perfectly satisfied with a Buick. But he hasn't money enough to buy one. Now if he goes and buys a Chevrolet on the instalment plan, what with the expense of keeping up the Chevrolet, he may never get money enough to get a Buick.

Some people like to buy a Chevrolet or a Dodge on the instalment plan. After they have worn the new off of it, they stop making payments and let it be taken away from them.

There are some people of means who like to have a Ford because they don't have to worry about it. If it gets smashed up, they can get another one. A second-hand one can be had for next to nothing.

Then there are some people who prefer to ride in taxis. Of course you can't expect much in a taxi. A lot of them are all battered up. As like as not, the previous passenger has spit all over the floor and scattered cigarette butts around. But you can get one whenever you want it, pay the fare when you get there, and you are through with it. Or, if anything happens to it, you just pay what's on the clock, and get another one.

On the other hand, there are some people that like to have a Packard or a Pierce Arrow or a Rolls-Royce. They would rather get what they want, stick to it, and keep it in good shape. They don't see any fun in riding around in other people's Fords.

Bertrand Russell says jealousy should not be considered a virtue any more, but if you go monkeying around with somebody's Packard for which he has paid good money and thinks highly of, why, you are likely to get a busted nose, and that's all there is to it.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Poorhouse Goes to the Circus

BY STARK YOUNG

THE town clock, cracked and muffled as if it sounded through far-off leaves, struck nine. Nettie, the cook, Babe, the local bricklayer, and Longstreet, the little mulatto boy who was bound to Nettie, sat counting the strokes till the last was done. It was a night late in October, sharp enough for a fire on the hearth; but the cabin door stood open and you could see the big house a short distance across the yard. All up-stairs and on the parlor and dining-room side down-stairs was dark, but the hall windows and the major's bedroom at the back were lighted; and the lamplight streamed out over the old box-bushes near the house and across the grass, which it turned into a bright green like paint. Everywhere else there was a deep, clear dusk. In the cabin a smoky lamp stood burning on the mantelpiece, which was littered with boxes and cans, a pair of shoes and two vases filled with paper flowers, fire-lighters twisted out of newspaper, and dried immortelles from the garden. The room was full of shadows. The bed in one corner and the pallet behind the door could be seen dimly; the two chairs and the box with its old cushion looked black as the seated figures outlined above them, on whose faces and hands and breasts and knees the glow of the embers cast a warm, steady light.

Nettie was roasting sweet potatoes in the ashes and now and then raked the old embers away and drew out fresh coals to take their place. The smell of wood-smoke and of the potatoes roasting spread into the air.

"When I was yo' age, son, I pintedly did love sweet taters," she said, smacking her thick lips to amuse the little boy.

"I loves um," Longstreet said, without moving from where he sat with his elbows resting on his knees and his cheeks on his palms.

He was nine years old now and had lived with Nettie since he was three, when his mother, who was a bad character in town, had gone off with a railroad hand one day without telling anybody and left the child behind. Longstreet was legally bound to Nettie, and she, on her part, was to look after him till he became of age. She had never had any children of her own and Longstreet was like her grandchild.

"You been here fourteen years, haven't you, Miss Nettie?" Babe said. He had been to school in Tuscaloosa and was careful how he talked. "Well, you won't be in this house much longer I reckon."

"Seem lak I won't, da's right," she said. Just then the front door-bell rang in the big house and she went to answer it.

Babe rolled a cigarette slowly, lighted it and sat smoking, and Longstreet watched him, still without moving, until presently Nettie returned.

"It's de choir done come," she said. "Doctor went away awhile ago; I let him out. 'Twan' no use his stayin', he can' do nothin mo' and he got other folks sick. He sent word to de choir of de church, Miss Jinnie say, for um to come sing to Marse Ab, and dey done come. Dey go sing some of dem salvation hymns, I reckin."

"That's all they can do, with him dying," Babe said. "When I die, Miss

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nettie, I wish I had his chances of heaven, I hope to God!"

"Me too; ain' dat right!"

"Yes, mam, Major Abner's going straight to heaven."

"Gwine a wash his feet in milk, gwi live on milk and honey, bless Gawd! Da's what he gwi do."

"Once when I was a young fellow I came here to lay the hearth again, in his bedroom, that's the very room now he's in, and he says to me: 'Babe, you niggers in your family are smart, you ought to learn your trade right and educate yourself.' Then he told me about Tuscaloosa. I ain't never heard of it before."

"He jes layin' dah wid his eyes shut," Nettie said. "Miss Jinnie settin' by 'im, and he jes keeps sayin': 'Lucy! Lucy!' He think she's his wife, but Miss Lucy been daid 'fo' you was born, Babe, sholy. He don' know I spied him, but I've seed him befo' he goes outn de house sometimes kissin' her picher in a frame on his bureau. Miss Jinnie's settin' by him. He's all she got in de world. She ain' had another thought, cepn him. She's free, white, and forty-one, but she ain' go leave her pa."

"Everybody's leaving them these days," Babe said, lighting another cigarette.

"Yas, and dese days dey gwine to de devil. I thought I's go nuss Miss Jinnie's chile same as I nussed her and made her dem rag-dolls fer her to play wid."

"But she stayed with her father," Babe said.

"I made her one ol' doll named Sally, wid button eyes and hips and breas's on her."

"But the bridegroom tarried, the bridegroom never came."

"Oh, dey been plenty of suitors one time, but she wouldn't look at um. Cepn one. Dat was dat young Mr. Amos from Kentucky, and she done sent him away after she been thinkin' fus' 'bout him and den 'bout leavin' her pa. I ain' got eyes for nothin', I seed her layin' 'cross de bed 'bout Mr. Amos being gone, but I ain' said a word. But dat was all a long time back."

"She better took him. She's going to be lonesome enough now," Babe said.

"I wants to be in dah wid Miss Jinnie right dis minute, he'pin her. But she don' wan' none of us in dah, jes wants him to herse'f, I reckin. She tol' me tonight: 'Aun' Nettie, don' wait wid me,' she say; and if anybody comes to de door jes tell um to please aixcuse her. Don' seem right, me outn here, Babe, but you got to let de white folks have dey own way."

The sound of chords struck on the piano came from the house, and you could see lights now in the parlor. The old square piano had long ago grown dry and twanging like a great banjo. Nettie rose and limped to the door to hear better, as the choir began to sing.

"Da's 'Rock of Ages Clef' for Me,'" she said. "Sho is sweet music, ain't it?"

Babe got up also and went to stand in the door, but Longstreet remained where he was by the fire. The voices rose into the air. He could hear the piano and the rustling of the leaves outside the cabin and the voices that sounded so sad and sweet, and he wanted to cry.

"Yas, sir, it fo'teen years since Marse Ab come back fum Kansas City whah he been. He go try busness dah. Shutted dis here house and went away to Kansas City. But he can' do no busness dat a way. What's Marse Ab know 'bout business? Jes lak a lil baby. He'd give you de clothes offn his back if you ax him. So in two years here he come back poorer'n ever, I reckin, him an' Miss Jinnie. Joe had done went off and lef' me by dat

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

time and I didn' have nothin to live on, wid rheumatism so I couldn' put one foot befo' de other. I jes had to go to de pohhouse. Well, den Marse Ab he come back and Miss Jinnie, and de fus thing I knows he hyerd whah I was. You know dat pohhouse, Babe, you been out dah tryin to make dem chimleys stan' up. You know how dey got dem five double cabins and a chimley between de rooms, and dat lil meetin-house chapel whah de white preachers fum town come out one Sunday a mont' to preach." She chuckled as she added: "Us didn' have much chance to sin but plen'y time to repent, I reckin."

"That's right," Babe said.

"So Marse Ab he cussed sompn turbil and come right out dah in de buggy and fotch me outn dat place, and bring me here to cook for him and Miss Jinnie eve'y since."

"An' Aun' Nettie sho know how to cook um good," Longstreet said, wanting to please her.

"I'm proud to hear you say sompn at las', boy, settin back dah lak de cat got yo tongue. What you got you thinkin 'bout? You ain' got no sense. So Marse Ab come back and he ain' done nothin since, nothin cepn set on de porch and read dem books and talk to Miss Jinnie and get her to play some o' dem pieces on de piano. 'Twan' nobody for him to talk to. Ain' nobody in dis town no mo' but trash, who he gwi talk to? Hit's fo'-teen years come Christmas, Marse Ab brung me here: right after dat fall we all went to de succus, fum de pohhouse."

Longstreet looked up. Every year he had seen posters in town, down by the railroad-sheds and on the store walls, telling about the circus in Memphis, but he had never seen one.

"Circus in this town?" Babe said.

"How come don't none come any more, Miss Nettie?"

"Ain' money enough nowadays. Cost too much runnin animals round in dem cages. Who gwi pay for dat in dis here town?"

"Nobody. Well, how did you all go to the circus and you in the poorhouse is what I'd like to know?"

The singing stopped and you could hear a woman crying, one sob after another.

Longstreet jumped up and stood as close as he could against the wall by the fireplace. He kept his eyes on Nettie as he said:

"Marse Ab give me a juice harp one time; it was in a box for it."

"I 'member dat red box wid dem gold letters on it," Nettie said. "You could play um right good, Longstreet."

She stepped out to the corner of the porch, where by standing on her toes she could see into the lighted room.

"He's talkin' to Miss Jinnie now and she's kneelin' by his side. De way he's lookin' up at her he don' look sad. He gwi cross over Jordan to-night, hallelujah! bless Gawd! Hit gwi take 'bout ev'ything dey got to pay for de buryin, I speck. Las' mont' Miss Jinnie sol' two of dem big beds up-stairs to dat white man was here fum St. Louis buyin up truck. But dat ain' kin worry Marse Ab now. He's happy."

"What I want to know is," Babe repeated, "how you-all got the money to go to any circus, Miss Nettie."

"How come it was, dey was a stray pig got under Uncle William's cabin, an' we cotch him and put him in a pen and fed him up till he lak to bus'; so when we hyerd de succus was come, we sol' dat shoat. An' right dah was de money."

"That's right."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"But hit don' take no money dis time, not to git in heaven," she said.

Longstreet looked at her.

"Is Marse Ab gwine right to heaven, Aun' Nettie?" he said.

"Hush up, boy, you know he is."

"Yas'm."

Nettie took her snuff-box from her pocket and dipped into it the stick with the end chewed into a little mop like a brush. She turned it in the snuff until there was a round ball of it, then put it between her teeth and her cheek, and came back to her seat by the hearth. Babe sat down again in his chair.

"Hit was thirteen folks at de pohhouse dat fall, but couldn' but five of us go. Sis Dean was too cripple wid de white swellin' in her legs, an' Eph and Rachel and some mo' of um like Pindar was outn dey haids, and Miss Cissie too, if she was a white lady. So some way jes us five went, me and Mr. Calvin—he was white too like Miss Cissie—and Aun' Lou, who run de place for de manager, and Uncle William and Doc, ev'ybody all dressed up and Doc wid his ol' swallow-tail done turned green as a bull-frog and dat scarf-pin he got wid dem greasy sets, and dat striped cane lak a stick o' candy. So we bumped along in de spring waggin down de dirt road till we seed de town clock. 'Da's Galilee!' Doc hollered, an' 'en we lef' de waggin an' went down to de sand-flats whah de tents was, by de depot."

Longstreet went over and stood leaning against her shoulder.

"You seed all dem things in de succus, Aun' Nettie," he asked, "lak what's in dem pitchers dey pastes up?"

"Go way, cose I seed um. De big tent and de lil ones, and dem waggins wid de golden cages too."

"And larns?" the little boy said, rising up and down on his toes with excitement.

"An' larns and tigers and big sarpints and snakes, of cose, boy; whah you think I been? Mr. Calvin, he kep' on ahead, bein white folks; but Doc, seem lak, was steppin on his heels, skippin along lak a hoppergrass. We seed dat trapee up dah in de air and folks swingin on it, and dem clowns and de knife-th'ower, and Mr. and Miz Snider, de lady and gen'man dogs. Dey lil house cotch fire and dey run out in dey nightshirts wid de baby."

"Baby dog?" Longstreet asked.

"De baby was a fice dog and dem friends skinnin outn de house was ev'y kind o' dog. Den de man say dey gwi send up de balloon dat night, but we had to go. Miss Cissie done give us a nickel to git her a bag o' pop-corn, an' Aun' Lou she fotch forty cents outn her stockin fer Doc to slip off somewhah an' git a drap o' Christmas."

"An' sho' 'nough dey th'owed knives on somebody?"

"Longstreet, you ain't got to be stretchin yo' eyes, chile. Dat Mexican flung his passel o' knives round dat gal o' hisn and stuck um in a plank of wood she was stannin agin, an' she step out and lef dem knives makin her picher; da's all 'twas, but I sho would lose my tas'e fer her job. An' so den we got home to de pohhouse and sot dah tellin de res' on um 'bout what we seed, and passed de bottle round, an' at ten o'clock, jes 'bout dis time, we seed dat balloon shootin up wid de fire and droppin down th'ough de sky. So us sot on talkin' and talkin', an' ol' Eph, if he couldn' hear nothin' we said, jes sot grinnin', and we was tellin' 'bout dat succus."

"I'm going to leave this town," Babe said, in a voice full of contempt and dis-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

appointment; "you don't see anything."

"Da's so."

"And now Major Abner's gone there won't be nobody at all but white trash and field niggers."

"Da's so."

"What's Miss Jinnie goin to do?"

"Gawd knows," Nettie said.

"Anyhow I got to get on home," Babe said. "So I'll tell you-all good night, Miss Nettie."

"Look out, son, Babe's goin'," Nettie said, pushing Longstreet away from her and rising and going out on the porch and down the steps with the bricklayer. Longstreet saw her big, motherly shape moving away from him and was afraid to stay in the cabin by himself. He hurried out and followed close beside Nettie and Babe, and at last slipped his hand into hers. When they had gone half the distance between the cabin and the house and could see the whole room through the windows, they stopped and stood looking in. The choir had gone except for an older woman with white hair, who was drawing a sheet up over something on the bed. Miss Jinnie was kneeling by the bed, her face buried in her hands. The white-haired old woman went to the head of the bed and leaned over.

"He's ceasted," Nettie said, in a whisper to Babe.

"Aun' Nettie, what dey doin'?" Longstreet asked, whispering too and huddling as close as he could into her skirt.

"Dey gwi put money on his eyes to make um stay shet. Come on, boy, you got to go to bed. You don' want to grow up no runt, is you?"

Then the old woman in the major's room went out and closed the door after her, leaving Miss Jinnie alone with the dead man.

Babe had gone home by the side gate, and Nettie and Longstreet came back to the cabin and sat down.

"Here, you ain' eat yo' sweet tater," she said, as she took a stick and raked the potato out on to the hearth and blew the ashes off the brown skin of it.

Longstreet did not kneel down by the hearth as he usually did and peel his potato; he sat there looking out of the door and into the dusk of the yard.

"Ain't you hongry, boy?"

"Naw'm, I ain' hongry."

"Den go lay down and go to sleep."

Longstreet undressed and put on his nightshirt, which Nettie made him wear instead of sleeping in his clothes, and went over to his pallet of quilts behind the door and lay lown; and Nettie took off her dress and her shoes—she had no stockings—and went in her cotton chemise to blow out the lamp, and then to bed. The fire was all out by now and the cabin dark, save for the light from the windows of the big house which shone through the chinks of the walls. Longstreet sat up on his pallet, trying to see Nettie's bed and looking at these spots of light in the darkness. Suddenly he heard a cry from outside, a long, sobbing cry.

"Aun' Nettie, I'm skeerd!" he said.

"You ain' skeerd. You ain' no mo' skeerd'n I is."

"Yas I is. Who dat out dah on de steps, Aun' Nettie?"

Nettie jumped up out of bed and stood with her head bent to one side, listening. There was no one.

"'Tain' nobody," she said sternly. "Miss Jinnie's cryin for her pa. I reckin I better light dat light, you fool boy!" She went grumbling over to the mantelpiece and struck a match to find the lamp.

"Anybody'd think you was crazy as ol' Miss Cissie at de pohhouse. She'd come

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

skinnin outn her dooh hollerin sompn was in dah."

She lit the lamp and looked quickly about the room.

"Hit's enough to git anybody skeert de way you cuts up, boy." Then she frowned at Longstreet as she went on:

"Here, wait, I'll fix um."

She took a pan from the cupboard in the corner, filled it with water and went with it to the door, while Longstreet never took his eyes off her and what she was doing. Then she opened the door and set the pan on the threshold. Spirits will not step over water with moonlight shining on it.

"Shucks, I fergit!" she said, almost as quickly, as she took the pan up again, flung the water across the porch to the ground, shut the door, and put up the wooden bar that bolted it. "Ain' no moon to-night, dis here's de dark o' de moon. Jes de same——"

She put up the pan and then went over and took the small mirror from a nail in the wall and hung it by her bed.

"Jes de same, I my hang up dis here lookin-glass over my bed; death ain' gwi look hissef in de face, and da's de truth."

Longstreet, hearing the crying in the house, began to whimper softly; he did not dare to cry aloud for fear of Nettie.

"Hush, boy, don't you be goin on. Miss Jinnie oughtn to be doin dat. Now listen, she's stopped; da's right. I sho would a stayed wid her if she'd a lemme. Fus' thing in de mornin I my be in dah, I don' keer what she say. You hear, boy, she's done stopped."

Longstreet held his breath and listened. The sobs could no more be heard; the place was still, not a sound. Then they heard the crying begin again, long choking sobs and moans.

Nettie turned down the lamp but left it burning as she went back and got into bed and drew up the quilt.

"Listen, Jesus, listen!" she murmured, raising her head from the pillow. "Miss Jinnie oughtn to be goin on lak dat, fit to bu's' her gullet; she better stop. Dat ain' right. Don' she know Marse Ab's a heap better off? He's gone to glory. Ain' never no mo' gwi be eatin dat hottened over victuals de day after, and wearin dem ol' patched clothes o' hisn I done washed to death, he's so particlar. Aw, naw, sirree, he ain't. He's gwine to walk dat golden stair."

The little boy had pulled his quilt up over his head and was half asleep. In his dreams he saw angels in balloons coming down with parasols; Marse Ab was there and bought him some pink lemonade and pink pop-corn in a ball. He started up with a cry, threw the cover down from his face, and jumped out of bed to listen. The sobbing had stopped again; everything was still; the dim lamplight threw shadows over the room and the light from the major's windows came through the chinks. He ran over and climbed into Nettie's bed.

As he snuggled in beside her she pretended to be asleep.

"Aun' Nettie!" he cried. He was trembling all over.

"My Gawd, boy, ain't you sleep? What you come wakin me up fer?"

"I's skeerd over dah," Longstreet said.

She put her big arm around him and pillowed his head on her breast, and with the other hand drew the covers tenderly up over the thin little body.

"If you don' go to sleep, I my take a stick to you!"

He was already asleep.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Warmth

BY KENNETH GRIGGS MERRILL
Author of "They Stand, Those Halls . . .," etc.

WARMTH! He wondered, this gray little old man, whether there was another person in the building who had any idea of what warmth could mean to a man. Why, it was the only palpable thing left in a vague world where existence itself had become hazy and bewildering. It was the one tangible goal in life.

He had simply followed a group of people through a big door, and suddenly here he was, seated on a soft cushioned bench . . . warm at last. If only those people next to him would get up so he could stretch out awhile and sleep! Funny, how inconsiderate people were—crowding in on him like this when he was so tired. . . .

Something else besides the cold had been troubling him before he had stumbled in here, for he had been walking a long time, looking . . . looking: doubtless he would soon remember what it was. A stout gentleman wedged in beside him—go on, squeeze, you big stiff!—and the faint aroma of coffee (that tantalizing odor which clings to a man who has just finished a good breakfast) came to his nostrils. That was it—he was hungry. . . .

But why should he be hungry? He had always had a job: that is, except lately. Lately he hadn't seemed to be able to do much, but that was only because his head felt so funny and his hand trembled so badly when he tried to write figures. Figures! Say, there wasn't any one here—and there must be thousands of people sitting around him—who knew as much about figures as he did. He'd kept books all over the world, he had. Kept 'em in dollars, pesetas, lire, francs, marks, pounds and shillings. Yes, and even in yen! He squared his meagre shoulders. Huh! He guessed there wasn't anybody in the world who had made journal entries in as many languages as he had. Like as not that big fat feller next to him there hadn't even *heard* of an abacus. He chuckled. Aw, stare, then . . . what the hell! . . . And as to honesty—gosh, he'd lived rough and all that, but folks had trusted him—even when he was drunk.

Some one was talking away. Eh, what was that? "Here endeth the first lesson." Great Scott! He was in a church! The film which clouded his eyes so much nowadays cleared slightly, and his mind, brought to life by warmth-quickened blood, accepted the picture of steps leading to a chancel, of a fluttering mass of black and white that was the choir. Raising his eyes, he saw an altar ablaze with candles and unconsciously rubbed his eyes to make sure it was not just that old vertigo coming back again.

The organ, rolling forth in the magnificent measures of a "Te Deum," broke in on his consciousness slowly, like the crescendo of an approaching train. For the love o' Mike, what was there about an organ to make a feller cry? The smooth profundity of the deep pedal notes set some vibration ajar within him, just as it had when he was a child. Compressing his colorless lips

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into a semblance of composure, he tried to focus his attention on the music. Why, say! He knew that tune, could even remember some of the words:

"All the earth doth worship thee,
The Father everlasting!"

Jiminy crickets! Think of remembering that all this time! *His* memory wasn't going bad. He'd been worrying about that lately, and here he was recalling something he used to sing fifty years ago, when he was a choir-boy at Llandaff Cathedral, back in Wales, where he was born! Ah, that was a proper church! The towering gray stone walls, green with lichen and moss, caressed by a thick growth of gentle vines, the unbuttressed eaves which spread so perilously outward, the roof, stanch these hundreds of years, which had always looked as though it might fall any minute—yes, he could see them all clearly. Just a little too clearly, perhaps. . . .

Suddenly he passed his hand over his forehead—and found it wet. For a second he had felt a wave of horror—the same horror that had gripped him the day he had seen his chum Lloyd Powell steal from the collection-box. Lloyd, his chum, whom he had worshipped with the single-minded devotion of boyhood—a love which is only surpassed when comes the love of woman! For just a moment he had felt once more the cold dismay which had swept over him when, with a suspicion born of proximity, *he* had been accused of the theft. It was a stout ship and a tough ship he had crawled aboard that night, torn between defending himself and exposing Lloyd. . . .

Perhaps he shouldn't have run away like that. Leastways, five years later he had lost a job in Sydney because one of the old congregation, travelling, had seen him, a decent young clerk at work over his ledgers, recognized him, and exposed his alleged guilt. It was natural for them to reason that he would never have run away if he had been innocent. Yes, maybe that running away had been a mistake. . . . Although Sydney was a good town—fine whiskey and plenty of it down there.

"When thou hadst overcome
The sharpness of death—"

chanted the choir.

Hadn't he seen the sharpness of death though, in his time! Africa, that was where men died sharplike. Down in the Belgian Congo—he'd been glad to get a timekeeper's job then, to keep body and soul together—hadn't he walked into the company club one night, seen a black face appear at the window, heard the report of a rifle, and watched the head bookkeeper, Swanson, sag down at his table like a punctured balloon? Of course the big brute only got what was coming to him—he should never have started monkeying with the native women—but it kind of took a feller's breath away, at that. Funny how things worked out! He would never have been given Swanson's job if Swanson had not been killed. And man, that was a real job! He'd held it an awful long time—most a year. But then, there wasn't any job he couldn't hold—as long as he watched himself and didn't take too much Scotch aboard. Hell! There he was thinking about booze again—and him in a church! Fiercely he stared up into the chancel.

"Keep us this day without sin—"

sang a beautiful little blue-eyed boy soprano, with the voice of an angel.

Shucks! What did any of these swell-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

looking folks know about sin—real sin? They should have been in China during the Boxer uprising. Why, no white man would believe what some of them yellow fellers did then, unless they had seen it like he had. And crooks? Say, it was something to have stayed cold honest, considering all the crooks he'd run up against in his day. Those birds, for instance, who had offered him five thousand gulden if he'd tell them the combination of the company safe when he was tallying the books for a big oil company in Soerbaja. They were bad 'uns. When he'd told them to go to the devil they had slugged him, used dynamite on the safe, and run off with a six months' gold payroll. Sin? Huh! He'd done a few things himself, but even when he was drunk he'd never taken a penny that didn't belong to him. Once he'd woke up after a month's jag in Burma—half crazy with the need of a shot or two to steady him—and a gold bracelet had fallen at his very feet from a passing carriage. He'd chased the rickety vehicle for a block, his head bursting, his heart pounding, to return it. Guess he'd get by old Saint Peter on the score of honesty all right. . . .

What was that dominie up there talking about now? Nothing to do with Burma. Burma—that was where he'd married that cockney girl—him a strapping lad of twenty-four, she a servant in the English quarter and ten years older 'n him. Hadn't he got even with her, though, for running away with a stevedore boss a few months later? Here he was alive and warm, while she had been dead forty-odd years. He snickered. Rare birds, these cockneys! What was it she used to give him for breakfast? Tea and toast and kippered fish. Pretty good for an old man to remember what he'd had for breakfast forty years before. Yessir, with a memory like that he wasn't done for yet—not by a long shot. . . .

"—the farmer in his humble home, the sailor in his hammock—" declaimed the minister, warming up to his sermon.

Sailoring—that was the life! Always a good warm bunk and plenty to eat. He ought to know; he'd put in two years of it—assistant purser on an Oriental line steamer. But them steamship fellers had been too particular about a gentleman taking a drink now and then. A man just had to drink a little something, down in the hot part of the world.

Not so cold here, for that matter. A feller could just doze on forever. Only he couldn't doze so good with all them candles up there blinkin' away like the lights in front of the mirror at the Miramar Café back in Rio de Janeiro. And that big red-faced guy walking up toward the front now—damned if he didn't look just like Charlie, the Miramar's bartender. Man, that was a *place!* Say all you please, a good taste for liquor gave a man lots of interestin' times The stories he had heard in barrooms! A hundred times better than the guff that bird was slinging up there in front. Wonder why old Charlie didn't throw him out? Charlie'd never stood for long-winded guys like that before. . . .

Phew! He was gettin' thirsty! Wish old Charlie would come over . . . he didn't feel like walking up to the bar. Too many lights up there; he might blink and they'd all think he was drunk. His head *did* feel funny, but didn't he have a damned good reason to be drunk? Hadn't he won five pounds in the lottery that very morning? He'd known he was going to win—had fig-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ured it all out. Always had been good at figures. He'd just multiplied the year —1898—by the amount of his stake, two shillings, and then bought a small share in ticket number 3796. Sure enough, he'd won five pounds. And now he was going to have another drink when Charlie came back with his change. He'd thrown his five pounds down on the table just like a lord—nothing cheap about him, he'd let all these dressed-up people know! How'd they get in here anyhow? The Miramar was a good honest bar, as places went, but it didn't usually have what you'd call swells hangin' around.

Gosh, if Charlie wasn't never going to bring his change, why didn't that other feller—the one in the big white apron—trot down with it? The change from a five-pound note would look like a lot of money in the Miramar—he'd better be careful. Grab it quick and stow it away. . . . Well! Well! Here was old Charlie now!

"Hell, Charlie, why didn't you bring it in a barrel?" he cried gleefully, as he reached forth and scooped up a double handful of bills and silver. . . .

A sudden horrid tumult assailed him. He was being pushed out of the Miramar—just when everybody was startin' to sing good, too. In a surprisingly short time a gigantic figure in blue was standing in front of him. In vain he tried to push his way past him.

"Aw, lemme go, flatfoot," he whined. "You don't want me. I was just havin' a little drink, and—" Some one behind him was talking in a low voice. He caught the words "robbing the church." He wheeled frantically. "What's that?" he screamed. "Robbin' a church? Me? My God, man, I didn't do it. It was Lloyd who took that money—I seen him do it. He's dead now, so I can tell on him. I—I——"

"Sure," said the policeman, with a wink at the verger, "I know how it is."

Abruptly, with one of the capricious twists of age, the old man's mind cleared. He heard the organ flooding the church with triumphant music, saw the long aisle, the choir, and the candle-lit altar. He looked down at his hands, at the scandalous potpourri of currency they clutched so tightly, and a great trembling came over him. He glanced at the policeman whose powerful fingers so easily imprisoned his thin old arm. Words sang in his brain, words from the familiar old "Te Deum" of his boyhood—"let me never be confounded——"

Him confounded? Him? With a lightning twist of muscle and sinew, learned thirty years before in a Geisha-house brawl, he tore himself from the officer, and, strangely, the terror in his face cleared as he flung the money into the aisle. Darting down the steps, he paused and shouted back: "You never *would* understand that was only my change!" Whereupon, with uncanny adroitness for one so old and weak, he disappeared in the crowd.

Late that night a rotten old windjammer cleared the Narrows, bound for Chile and a load of nitrates. Safely hidden away in one of the life-boats, whimpering with hunger, shaking with cold, was a gray little old man . . . running away again. . . .

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How the American Middle Class Lives

BY ONE OF THEM

The problem is not only one of food and shelter but the need for grace in living. The American middle class has been scoffed at as a plodding unimaginative crowd. Here is one of them who tells why plodding is necessary and why the imagination must be kept within bounds. It is an explanation of "respectability."

"WHAT I care most about in the world," said Mrs. Dickinson, as she looked about her living-room, where her oldest son was completing a built-in bookcase, "is to have our children grow up among beautiful things. When we have seen them through college, we'll sell the house and retire to a flat in our old age."

The savings which had built the house had been scraped, dollar by dollar, from the salary of Professor Dickinson, which amounted to twenty-seven hundred a year. They have three children, and would have had at least five if the salary had been larger. For seventeen years they lived in a series of apartments, leaving the last one when the boys' not always maidenly merrymaking caused a sudden soaring of the rent.

Mrs. Dickinson, who could give you carrots three meals in a row without your suspecting it, feeds her family of five on fifteen dollars a week. She gives them lavishly of prunes and apples, cabbage, onions, and lentils. Meat they have only on Sundays. In order to pay their church dues of ten dollars a year, the parents once went without fruit all winter long. Yet the family all look as if they had plenty to eat, and their friends like to drop in at tea-time, for the best cake is to be had there as well as the best conversation. Not only is every friend of every member of the family welcome at every time in the day, but thoughts and ideas that you never gave yourself credit for find utterance in that emancipating hospitality.

Mrs. Dickinson's idea of luxury is to be able to buy a book or a piece of music when you want it. Because any budget they could draw up would allow so little for the "higher life," so called, they long ago gave up keeping one. They prefer, instead, to buy the occasional book or picture, and to pay for it and for other ventures as ingenuity suggests. To help a young relative through college, Professor Dickinson lived on bread and water for six months in his own student days.

All expenses are scaled down to the minimum. They take no magazines except one educational journal and the Boy Scout paper. Unless friends give them extra tickets, they never go to the theatre or the concert, or even to a lecture. They never travel or go on trips. They never dine at restaurants. They have no domestic help of any kind, except a college boy during the Easter holidays to help with the spring cleaning. One year, when Mrs. Dickinson

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had diphtheria, the professor did it himself in addition to all the housework, including the laundry and taking care of the children. Mrs. Dickinson was given a room at the home of a practical nurse, a Polish woman, who gave her what time she could spare from the butcher-shop where she assisted her husband. This arrangement proved much cheaper than either a bed in a hospital or a nurse at home.

As in so many middle-income families, sickness is the item that has taken the lion's share: the usual children's diseases; the inevitable tonsils, appendices, and dentistry; a broken leg; a double mastoid. Nothing at all out of the way. And yet in some years sickness has cost them a thousand dollars. "But I never grudge a doctor a cent he gets," said Mrs. Dickinson. "I feel that there at least we get our money's worth."

It was the hope of overcoming a chronic bronchial condition that had forced Professor Dickinson, shortly after his marriage, to give up a lucrative teaching position in New York City and to accept one in a more favorable climate at half the salary. Had he stayed on in New York, the extra doctors' bills incurred by less healthful living conditions would doubtless have eaten up more than the additional pay.

His inability to supplement his salary to any appreciable extent by writing text-books and by tutoring has been due to his insistence on taking the heaviest part of the household labor off the far from sturdy shoulders of his wife. She, in her turn, has had her three children in public wards to save him money.

To support the average-sized American family of five on twenty-seven hundred a year is, I am well aware, a feat successfully performed by thousands of our fellow countrymen. Many more thousands do it on less. To feed, clothe, house, and educate such a family adequately is no mean achievement either. But to do all this not only with efficiency but with grace and with an air of leisure; to be able, while you are eating your eggless breakfast and your meatless dinner in your heavily mortgaged house, to realize that your college training has placed you among the favored few; to see those of your friends who happen to have independent incomes buying themselves theatre-tickets and trips round the world, and not to resent it; to scrape carrots day in and day out, and to feel neither self-pity nor a vindictive superiority toward those who do not have to, these things require a magnanimous spirit. Talk about being creative! That is creation at its source.

Some younger friends of the Dickinsons, the Hallets, began their married life in New York. Jim Hallet was connected with one of the publishing houses, and Corinna (she had given herself the name at the age of five) worked on the staff of one of those struggling poetry magazines whose existence is so dramatically precarious. She did the housework after they returned at night to their much-ridiculed hole-in-the-wall, a one-room apartment behind a garage for which they paid ninety dollars a month. He read aloud to her while she washed the dinner-dishes in a kitchenette the size of a dumb-waiter; then she, sitting on the edge of the bathtub, read to him while he ran the washing-machine. After five years of this, broken only by their two-weeks-a-year vacations, and by their semiannual attacks of grippe, they had saved up enough to have a baby. And, with the fulfilment of their dearest

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hope, their troubles began. Within six months visits to specialists and the purchase of a violet-ray machine to overcome rickets had swallowed up their savings. They had moved to a larger and better apartment, but could not afford sun. Tad was so delicate that they have had to send him away every summer to the beach with a nurse, which his mother has paid for by working during his absence at her old job when others of the staff were away. Or did until two years ago, when her health broke under the strain begun when she put herself through college in addition to caring for an invalid father. For nearly a year she lay flat on her back in a sanitarium, while a series of little "mothers" of every nationality except American have cared for Tad by the day. By editing a book for a professor friend, Corinna was able in part to defray the expenses of her illness, but they are badly in debt. Tad, who will never know the companionship of a brother or sister, is now seven. He weighs but thirty pounds, and is still wearing his three-year-old suits. Yet the saving up for treatments and diets with the hope of bringing the most elusive of fairy gifts to their many-gifted child makes the drama of his parents' lives. His mother is not strong enough yet to take him to the park, so they sit on the door-step to get the air, while he calls out to the children who pass by and makes up stories about them. The doctor has advised against school for another year. They cannot move out to the suburbs, because Jim was crippled in the World War, and has to be near his work.

"Of all the days in the world," says his wife, "I dread New Year's. I make out the budget as we would like to have it, and then I realize that it will most of it go for sickness."

Their case, however, is not so hard as that of the Munroes. He was a brilliant student in the medical school when he got married. His wife helped out by doing the dishes in the boarding-house where they occupied the cheapest room, and by teaching school. By the time he was ready to start practising, she was so worn out that she will never be able to bear a child. Now that he is assisting a leading baby specialist, she fills the lonely hours by taking convalescent mothers with delicate babies to board.

"Well, well!" I can hear some one among our elders mutter testily. "The young folks nowadays expect life to be all apple pie. A couple just starting out in life cannot expect to keep up with the Joneses. Now, when I was young —" etc., etc.

Among the class of whom I write, keeping up with the Joneses has no place whatever, unless Jones is used as a generic term signifying self-respecting Anglo-Saxons. As such, there are indeed certain standards of living which we seek to preserve. While we are willing to start housekeeping in one-room apartments, we cannot afford to risk losing our jobs by living in tenements though they may be equally comfortable. If we have a child, we will take lodgers or boarders in order to pay the rent in a reasonably respectable neighborhood, principally because it means good public schools and association with people of our own race. The Pilgrim fathers moved their flock across the water from Holland because they wanted them to grow up English instead of Dutch. It was racial self-preservation, not snobbishness.

While many parents among us have for days together lived on baked beans and bread, we do not dare to economize

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in this way on the food of our growing children. Fresh fruits and vegetables, good butter and Grade A milk, and strictly fresh eggs, although we buy them at the A. & P., are more costly for the time being, but cheaper in the long run than the bread and tea and candy diet on which so many tenement children weaken their teeth and their bones. In many families, especially in times of sickness or bad weather, the father of the family has to do the marketing, which means that he must stand in line in a crowded store before he takes up his vigil at the white post in the rain and wind, a vigil which precedes the daily twenty minutes or more of strap-hanging. And when at last he does get home, there is the inevitable door-bell or plumbing or washing-machine to either fix or endure as taste and temperament shall decree.

In the budget of the middle-class American, rent, food, medical attendance, and life insurance constitute the Big Four. Men who are earning three thousand a year will spend as much as five hundred on this last item, particularly important at the time when their children are small and need their mother's constant care. This, of all expenditures, is the most thankless, and yet is one which the conscientious husband and father cannot ignore.

For the education of our children before college, we pay only indirectly. As American citizens we believe in and uphold the public school as we do the right to vote, and are its stanchest supporters. It was through them chiefly that we received our own schooling, and it is from among us that their teachers and administrators are recruited. We do, however, realize that all public schools are not equally desirable, and will therefore sacrifice other things to pay the rent in those communities where they are best, and where our children, who can at least speak their mother tongue, will not have their claims slighted to meet the demands of newly arrived immigrants. Except at the state universities, college education must be paid for by either the parents or the student. I do not believe that any one who has put himself entirely through, board, lodging, tuition, and the rest, will want his children to bear the whole expense themselves. Many of my generation have paid for it bitterly by health gone or seriously impaired.

It is because we middle-class people are coasting along so near the edge that we carry the prosaic virtues of punctuality, neatness, and faithfulness to details so far as to seem ludicrous to those who are differently situated. The bank president can afford to be late, but the bank clerk cannot. It may cost him his job, or his raise. His wife is careful to keep the home neat, to set the table with care, and to maintain a general air of shipshapeness in household appointments, because she realizes, consciously or unconsciously, that the slipping up on such details as these leads to a general slump in the standard of living and a loss of self-respect. Unmade beds in unaired bedrooms, children who are only bathed on state occasions, the housewife in a sweater and petticoat putting the cracked teapot on the stove while the door sags from its hinges and the faucet everlastingly drips, this state of affairs would be so easy by imperceptible degrees to lapse into, that we safeguard ourselves by a hundred small refinements and formalities that together make for decency and civilization.

The hardest element in middle-class poverty is not the big sacrifices—the going to work oneself that a gifted broth-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

er or sister may go to college; the giving up, as one doctor did, of a lucrative city practice and all that went with it, to work among the farmers in a Vermont village. There is drama in that. Nor is the hardest thing the very long hours of work required. The young professional man often sits up till one or two in the morning writing book reviews or doing other hack-work to eke out his income. The wife of one such man, a clergyman, sews every night until midnight, then rises at six to care for the baby. The baby's brother, who has no playroom, amuses himself mornings by putting soap-suds into the custard and clothes-pins into the cake batter while his mother is answering the pastor's telephone calls. The hardest thing is the never having any leeway either in time or money, the having to put the brakes on every impulse that might lead one away from the financial chalk-line. "It's not the stinting on shoe-laces," as one man put it, "it's the never being able to take a flyer on the Stock Exchange." It is this handling of every penny till the skin is worn off your fingers that kills, in many of us, what is most individual and worth saving. It is this that gives to the middle-aged woman among us who does the penny-hoarding that suggestion of pressed flowers from whom the pages of the book of life have squeezed out all the juice.

From the outside our lives appear dull and drab—a cabined existence bounded by the schedule and the budget. We keep the laws of our country and uphold its institutions in time of peace, we volunteer with the first in time of war. We cast our vote. We pay our tax. We bring up our children to be self-supporting citizens. These things we do as a matter of course, realizing that they are the mere framework of life, the dry bones of existence. We crave adventure, experimentation, drama, beauty; only we know that for ourselves they cannot be bought save at the expense of our daily bread. Underneath our two-by-four life goes forward the everlasting saga, the battle between man as a creature of physical needs and man as a civilized human being. We Elder Brothers have our temptations as well as the idolized Prodigals. We who have witnessed the tragedy of the father, told that he had cancer, who blew out his brains rather than use, to prolong his own life, the money saved to put his son through college; we who, in our youth, have known the romance of high-school courtships and of apple-orchard raids in the autumn twilights; we who have seen the fight for American principles that is waged in the school, the pulpit, the press, and the assembly-hall, we could write some chapters into the history of American life and manners that would match the most dramatic.

Meanwhile we are applying to the making of a life as well as of a living all the ingenuity and initiative and intelligence that we possess. In one college town, for instance, there is a club devoted to the purpose of getting your money's worth in articles of food, clothing, household equipment, and medicines. Samples of breakfast cereals, cleaning powders, and the like have been analyzed by experts, and their findings been tabulated for the benefit of the consumer.

Another matter in which we come as near as any group to getting a return for our money is that of domestic service—the little that we have. When we want to have the windows washed or to get some one to "listen for" the baby while we go out in the evening, we call in high-school and college students—

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the sons and daughters, sometimes, of our own friends. Student help is cheaper than other kinds for two reasons: you pay them less because they are young, and what they do is done both quickly and well. Where master and man, mistress and maid are social equals, there is no servant problem. The sons of our friends tend our furnaces; and our daughters work out their board and lodging at college by caring for the children of the college's alumnæ.

In the field of our heaviest financial casualties, that of medical costs, we are defraying expenses in a number of ways. We take our babies to the milk and baby hygiene clinics; and, where a call from the district nurse for fifty cents answers our purpose, we dispense with a three or a five dollar visit from the doctor. That now flourishing institution, the practical nurse, who, in addition to nursing care, will do the housework and take care of the children for half what you pay a trained nurse, is a great boon to us. As we realize that an ounce of prevention is many times worth a pound of cure, we have our children Schicked and Dicked and dieted, and all the rest of it.

The few children that we feel able to afford, that is. For, while we continue to teach in the schools and the colleges, to carry on research work in laboratories, to preach, and to practise law and medicine, to run magazines and newspapers, and add up figures in banks for two thousand a year and odd, we will not populate the country on that. Statistics show that college graduates as a group are not perpetuating themselves. Among the great mass of us who are wholly dependent upon our own earnings, three children are considered a big family, and four are almost unknown. Increasing numbers of us have but one child, intending, if possible, some day to have another. With many of us that day never comes. More and more common is the practice of the woman's keeping on with her job after marriage, postponing children indefinitely. Quite naturally the modern young couple hesitates to undertake responsibilities which they have seen their parents break under.

There will always be teachers and scientists and engineers and the rest because society has need of them. It is a question of whether these callings shall be followed by all-round men with families and generous interests, or by men who, in order to give themselves to their work, must give up every other aim in life. Is it fair either to the professional man or to the interests of his profession that he should have to choose between marriage and a career?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An Italian Fantasia

BY ROYAL CORTISSOZ

A PORTENTOUS event is impending in the world of art. On New Year's Day, or thereabouts, there will be opened at Burlington House an exhibition of Italian paintings which in some respects at least promises to be unique. When the Committee organizing the affair began its labors it found no one more sympathetic to the idea than Mussolini, who is the "Presidente Onorario" of the body formed for the occasion in his own country. Through his good-will the Italian Government has "let down the bars" and pictures will go to London from sources hitherto never drawn upon for public exhibitions in foreign lands. They will come, to begin with, from the Uffizi and the Pitti in Florence, from the Brera in Milan, and from the Accademia in Venice. Then the provinces have been ransacked, contributions being expected from Brescia and Naples, Urbino and Rimini, Parma and Pavia, Bergamo and Verona. At the moment of my writing the exact nature of the loans has not been disclosed but there is every reason to believe that they will be of a high order. They will go to London by sea, escorted by torpedo-boat destroyers. Italy is doing everything possible for the exhibition and other Continental nations are participating. Private collectors in Great Britain will lend a hand and important pictures will be sent from the United States. The British have already shown how persuasive they can be in these matters, in the Flemish exhibition of two years ago and in the Dutch one that followed it. They know how to ferret out desirable loans and in all the details of assembling them they have a fine technique.

The forthcoming show will embody an extraordinary survey of Italian painting, from the Florentine and Sienese Primitives to Venetians as late as Tiepolo, and besides the pictures there will be a few notable sculptures, some tapestries, some furniture, and collections of glass and majolica. Especially stimulating is the news that two rooms will be devoted to drawings, souvenirs of Raphael, Titian, Tintoretto, Botticelli, Leonardo and a host of others. The genius of the art of the Renaissance is expressed in nothing more subtly or more eloquently than in its drawings. Altogether I do not doubt that throughout the world there are people who feel, as I do, a kind of premonitory thrill as they hear of the preparations in London.

◇ ◇ ◇

There is something singularly potent about the hold of Italian art upon the imagination of mankind. The sway of Greek architecture and sculpture is supreme. The efflorescence of French mediævalism in the Gothic cathedrals is a phenomenon by itself, glorious and immortal. In the sphere of pure painting there are certain incomparable apparitions like the Van Eycks in Flanders, like Rembrandt in Holland, like Velasquez in Spain, indispensable to one's sense of balance in the artistic cosmos.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

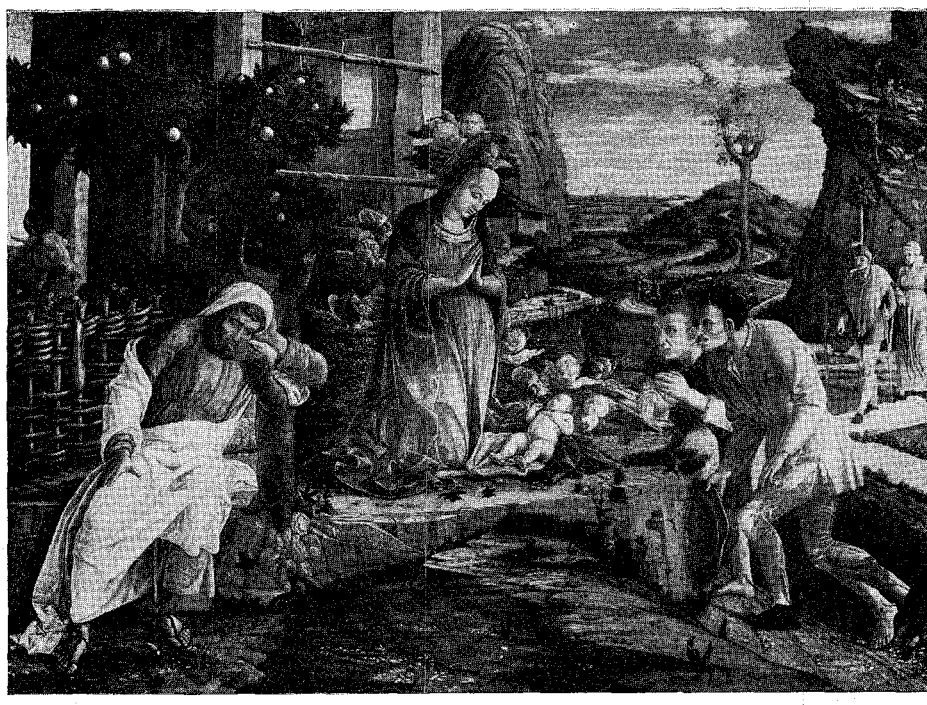
The Nativity.

From the painting by Piero Della Francesca in the National Gallery.

Bacchanale.

From the painting by Bellini and Titian in the Joseph E. Widener collection.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The Adoration of the Shepherds.

From the painting by Mantegna in the Clarence H. Mackay collection.

Gian Galeazzo Sforza.

From the portrait by Antonio Pollajuoli in the Uffizi.

Giovanna Tournabuoni.

From the portrait by Ghirlandajo in the J. Pierpont Morgan collection.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ugolino Martelli.

From the portrait by Bronzino in the Berlin Museum.

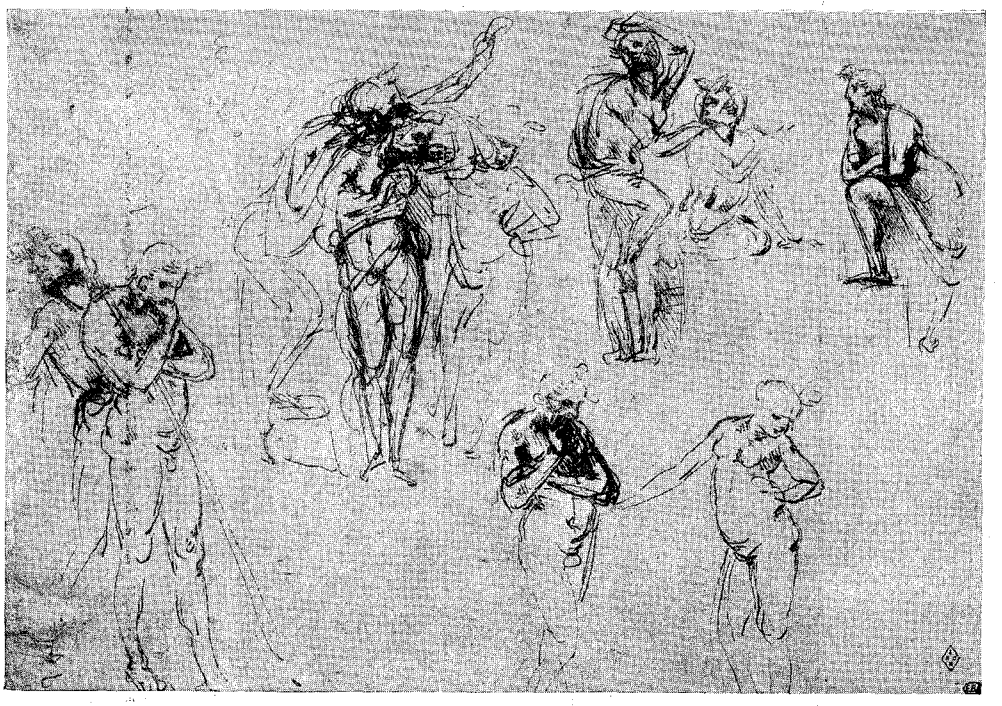
Madonna and Child.

From the painting by Crivelli in the Jules S. Bache collection.

The Adoration of the Shepherds.

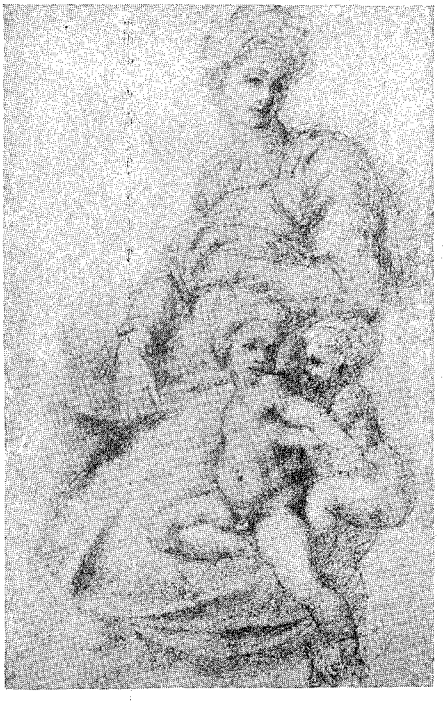
From the painting by Piero Di Cosimo in the Berlin Museum.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Studies of Figures.

From the drawing by Leonardo Da Vinci in the Armand-Vallon collection.



Madonna and Child, with St. John.

From the drawing by Michael Angelo in the British Museum.

Abundance.

From the drawing by Botticelli in the British Museum.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yet Italian art maintains its status as rivalling "the antique" (by which it was so richly influenced) and even, perhaps, surpassing it as providing the groundswell of our æsthetic culture. There is something peculiarly ancestral about it, as though all men who care for beauty unconsciously harked back to Italy, regardless of history, but simply in obedience to some obscure spiritual force. When the Italian masters do not supply the initiative they supply the ultimate goal, as I realize in musing upon the possibilities of American representation at Burlington House. Forty years ago, when our collectors were still paying tribute to the Paris Salon, their excursions into the domain of earlier painting were Dutch or English, with a measure of inclination toward eighteenth-century French portraiture. Then eclectics like the late John G. Johnson of Philadelphia deviated into the Italian school. He had to content himself, to be sure, with many minor pieces. It was long before the pressure of economic conditions abroad brought numerous major examples into the market. But at last, when the tide turned, it turned with a vengeance and brought to these shores such jewels as the great Bellini "Bacchanale" in the Widener collection, the rare group belonging to Clarence Mackay, with its Pisanello, its Mantegna, its Baldovinetti and its Sassettas, or Mr. Bache's Crivelli, his Botticelli and his Titian. The American connoisseur to-day neglects no school but there can be no question, I think, about the primacy of the Italian in his affections.

What is it that thus dominates us? Convention, to some extent, once played its part in the matter. The eighteenth-century British nobleman made a fashion of the Italian travels that other men had embarked upon in earlier generations and he bought works of art out of much the same sense of what was "due to his position." So Italianate was the old Society of Dilettanti that it observed with rigor this regulation: "That no Person can be proposed to be admitted of this Society but by a Member who has been personally acquainted with him or her in Italy." When the regulation was modified it was only by a resolution enabling the Society to eat its cake and have it too, thus: "That it is the opinion of the Society that Avignon is in Italy," and "That no other town in France is in Italy." But I am enough of a romanticist to believe that in more modern times the cult has had more than fashion for its origin. For one thing, there is the magic in the Italian air. I remember how heavily it counted in my own experience long ago. My first contacts with the European galleries were on Belgian soil, where I saw in their austere brilliance the works of the Flemish Primitives. But then, after wanderings in the North, through Holland and Germany, there came the journey over the St. Gothard, the gradual descent into the Italian plain, and explorations that seemed to eclipse all that had gone before. One episode of my excited research at the Ambrosiana at Milan—the *tondo* of Botticelli—lives for me to this day. Beyond the kneeling Madonna, seen through the parted draperies of a tentlike canopy, there lies a landscape in which the very fragrance and grace of the Italian countryside are captured. In some lucky moment of divination then I had a foreshadowing of what was later to be made more and more clear to me, that that magic in the air to which I have referred, so inspiring to the modern traveller, was infinitely inspiring, too, to the Renaissance painter. It is a curious circumstance. He was slow enough to grasp the beauty of land-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scape for its own sake. Even a genius like Mantegna, poring over his rocky stratifications with the patience of a miniaturist, was unaware of what could be made out of the visible world in a painted picture. It was only in Venice, under the puissant brush of a Giorgione or a Titian, that landscape, as such, was to come into its own. Yet, paradoxically, as I say, Italian art has always had its alliance with nature, a delicate, even frail alliance, like that which I have indicated in the Botticelli at Milan, but one with the principle of life in it—and the principle of beauty.

◇ ◇ ◇

It is an old notion of mine that awareness of this particular relation between nature and art in Italian painting is a precious element in one's studies, and by "nature" I mean specifically the typical aspects of the Italian scene, the intensely characteristic forms of the stone pine, the cypress and the olive, the unmistakable individuality of hill and valley, nay, the outline, the color, the light and shade of the cities and towns themselves. The seeker after Italian art will find it, obviously, in the galleries, but they do not tell the whole story. You will apprehend part of it if you will look out upon Umbria from the heights of Perugia, or mount to the old powder magazine at Urbino and gaze over the billowing trees that fill the valley of the Foglia, or ramble on the mainland back of Venice, or sit on the Janiculum and see the dome of St. Peter's lifted above the rosy tiled roofs of Rome. It is all germane to our subject, for it is all saturated in the sheer beauty that makes the soul of Italian painting.

What a strange, insoluble mystery in the evolution of mankind that soul is! Whistler refers it to the creative individual, and no doubt he is right. Without your Giotto, or your Duccio, or your Leonardo you have no Renaissance. But somehow the famous dictum always sticks in my crop. "Listen! There never was an artistic period. There never was an Art-loving nation." You cannot answer it with a syllogism; you can only oppose to it a fact—that there was a Renaissance Italy. And one reason I have for resting with confidence upon that fact is the close connection between the Renaissance artist and what I may call the day-to-day movement of Italian life. The artist was not always an Olympian. But even when he was he walked about with his feet upon the solid earth. Nobody in that august company springs full-fledged from the forehead of Jove. The mystic promptings of genius are fostered by the hands of mortal men. Giotto "carries on" with what he has taken over from Giovanni Pisano. Leonardo is trained by Verrocchio. Michael Angelo is a disciple of Ghirlandajo, who, for all his powers, was scarcely a denizen of Olympus. Forever in the history of Italian art you are dealing with teacher and pupil, master and apprentice, which is to say with the *bottega* system, which is to say with a craft. If there is one thing more than another of which it is important never to lose sight in that world of demi-gods it is the ponderable, human side of their destiny. I wrote in these pages not long ago on "The Mystery of the Leonardesque." It is the predominant lure where this master is concerned. But I love to think of him in the mood of this note on one of the apprentices he was wont to take into his house at 5 *lire* a month:

Giacomo came to live with me on the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, 1490. He was ten years old. The second day I ordered two shirts, a pair of hose and a doublet for him. When

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I put aside the money to pay for these things he took it out of my purse. I was never able to make him confess the robbery, although I am certain of it. A thieving, lying, pig-headed glutton.

A passage like that, so evocative of a simple, homely moment in life, helps the student to guard himself against too fine-drawn analyses, against too metaphysical an approach, and, indeed, against that bane of art appreciation, highfalutin. It is well to sit reverently at the feet of the master, to conceive of him nobly. It is well also, it is a tonic, to turn to a maxim of his like this: "Men and words are actual, and you, painter, if you do not know how to execute your figures, will be like an orator who does not know how to use his words." It was in perpetual oscillation between the things of the spirit and the things that could be touched and handled that Italian painting took its amazing course, achieving, as it progressed, a perfect synthesis. Side by side with the cult of the Madonna went the cult of the studio, soul and mind working together, and the technique which Leonardo based on his "actuality" bore the painter into the high regions of design. I visualize the forthcoming exhibition at Burlington House as embodying a very rich and varied cluster of motives for the student —imagination, the power of the "seeing eye," religious ecstasy, sensuous fervor, the splendor of color. Also I see it in my mind's eye as a great demonstration in the art of picture making, of composition, of the masterful faculty which gives felicitous arrangement alike to observed fact and to pure dreams. Nothing more definitively marks the Renaissance painter of the first flight than his art in the filling of a given space.

To some extent it waits upon the exigencies of rather naïve pictorial narrative in the works of the Primitives, but as the various schools get into their stride they unite upon dignity and grace in design. Rediscovered classical antiquity had some influence upon their drift toward an ideal of symmetry, of poise. The enthronement of the Madonna, a centralizing, balancing factor, also had its effect upon the painting of thousands of panels, contributing to the development of something almost like a formula. But chiefly, I believe, the Renaissance drove by instinct at ordered, coherent design. You feel it in architecture and sculpture, in furniture and in the other more or less decorative crafts. You feel it intensely in painting. No matter in what direction you look you find the discreet composer at work. Consider Piero della Francesca, either in the pastoral "Nativity" of the National Gallery or in the majestic "Resurrection" at Borgo di San Sepolcro. Consider a Florentine profile, like Ghirlandajo's "Giovanna Tournabuoni," in the Morgan collection. Consider the benign beauty of a Madonna by Bellini, in fifteenth-century Venice, say the one in San Zaccaria, and then, with a leap some centuries onward, think of one of Tiepolo's palpitant ceilings in the same city. It was in the Italian blood, that gift of organization, that ineffable, priceless gift of design.

◇ ◇ ◇

It is the stamp of the full-rounded master, the creative genius, who, knowing his trade and having inexhaustible imaginative resources, can do anything, can, in fact, draw nearer and nearer to perfection. It is, I fancy, this consummate character of Italian painting that accounts for its overwhelming prestige, that as much as its extraordinary wealth in beauty. Other schools are splendid in the possession of this or that element of greatness but the Italian goes deeper and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rises higher than any of them. "And poets, garland bound, the lords of thought, draw near." The lords of thought! The phrase fits absolutely the leaders of Italian art. Raphael, weaving his vast webs of design in the Stanze of the Vatican, is a miracle of pure intellect, and Michael Angelo, dipping his brush in earthquake and eclipse as he tackles the Sistine Chapel, achieves in the heroical deployment of his decorations one of the outstanding monuments of the human mind. There is a magnificent steadfastness about the Renaissance artist. He lived in a disordered time, in one of political flux and reflux, of social turbulence and peril, but he went his way with a beautiful fidelity to an ideal of unity. It is fascinating to dwell upon the immovable temper of his craft, upon his unswerving pursuit of a beauty fashioned after his heart's desire. His field was unlimited. Look back at what might be called his raw material and you see that there indeed was "God's plenty." The church no doubt was his prime patron, but besides the infinite pictorial stuff of Holy Writ he had the whole pagan rout on which to wreak his powers of line, form and color, and the innumerable great portraits alone, from the beginnings down to Titian or Moroni, show what spurs he had in life and character. Devout and mundane, Scriptural, Virgilian, tinctured with the spirit of Dante, Boccaccio or Poliziano, he moved through a wilderness of ideas with the conviction of the artist pure and simple. Himself, on occasion, a desperately secular type, he could function as the authentic interpreter of sacred themes, for at bottom he was stirred by a divine passion, the passion for beauty. There never was a painter quite like him, this protean figure upon whom I have been tempted to pause by the exhibition to come in London. In spite of Whistler he imposes upon us the invincible authority of a people, a place and a period—and of a grandeur that stands alone.

A calendar of current art exhibitions will be found in the Fifth Avenue Section.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED